■ Entertainment
Funny men, cool dads

■ Sports
Pacquiao ties Manuyama for US Open lead

■ Lifestyle
Roberto de Ocampo: Kickin' and pluckin'

■ World / A8
American hostage beheaded; Saudi al-Qaida chief killed

■ Magazine
Linex 'Bata' Reyes: Dad is a Champ

After pullout, FPJ lawyers assail canvass

By TJ Burgonio, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

TEST started a melee when they withdrew from the congressional canvassing committee. How, wondering from the sidelines, they could catch get their teeth.

"We can't be a case for grave abuse of discretion because our candidate is entitled to due process and protection of his rights," lawyer Antonio Cruz said yesterday as the committee proceeded with the vote canvassing despite the absence of a lawyer for opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Cruz's colleague, Estelito Mendoza Jr., also hinted.

"They proceeded last night without us... If you could something, it must be thoroughly studied," Mendoza told a press conference in Club Filipino in San Juan.

Asked if Poe still wanted to hire new lawyers to represent him in the canvassing, Mendoza said: "Nobody will replace us anyone."

(FULL STORY A10)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Sunday, June 26, 2004 ★ 72 pages / vol. 19 / no. 183

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GMA ready to kiss, make up with 'termite'

By Pia R. Zamora

FERNANDO POE Jr. in the enclosure of the canvassing, signs the document releasing his lawyers, Rufus Rodriguez and Harriet Demetriou, from participating in the canvassing

GMA prepares for victory party

Count over today; Gonzalez says it's Gloria-Noli

By Cynthia D. Balana, Carlito Pablo, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

THE ALLIES of Fernando Poe Jr. succeeded yesterday in blocking the voter counts from Cebu City and Bandian but it seemed like a small victory in a fight already lost.

About two hours before the joint congressional canvassing committee announced its vote tabulation to determine the winner of the May 10 presidential election, President Macapagal-Arroyo said categorically for the first time that victory was hers.

"We will have the inauguration in Cebu," she told the new officers of the National Press Club, the Press Photographers of the Philippines and the Press Emerald Photojournalists Association.

It is as sure as the sun rises, said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

Senate Deputy Speaker and canvassing co-chair Aquilino Pimentel announced an extra mall vote for opposition stalls.

"It's DAYA-Noli Lib-Cuenca," Gonzalez told the business, referring to Ms Macapagal's running mate, who sailed solo his announcement of the election win, based on the certificates of canvass held by the Commission on Elections.

Gonzalez said that the winner could be proclaimed either on June 30 or June 30, at the latest.

By Macapagal made the casual remark as she sat down to lunch with journalists and photographers this morning after the lawyers of her closest rival, Poe, pulled out of the congressional canvassing, protesting alleged political harassment and bias.

Still, opposition lawmakers went through the motions of a fight when the 22-member panel resumed its tabulation—but they fought until two days.

Hardly any votes were tasked during yesterday's tallying of the votes.

After 11 days of overwhelming defeats and objections from the opposition, the joint committee finally tabled on its plea to defer the tabulation of the certificates of canvass (COCs) from Cebu City and Bandian due to alleged fraud and discrepancies in the voters' turnout in the election documents.

(MORE, A10)

Poe lawyers blame Palace for kidnap rap

By TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza

TWO ELLAWYERS of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday said the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was behind the lodging of charges of serious illegal detention and grave coercion against them for the alleged abduction of an election officer from Tipo-tipo, Basilan.

"This is the handiwork of Malacañang. And the PNP-CIDG (Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group) is being used to harass us," Harriet Demetriou said in a press conference in Club Filipino in San Juan.

"This is deplorable in a democracy. It's understandable if we're under a dictatorship," Demetriou said, adding:

"We're under undeclared martial law. At least (Ferdinand E.) Marcos declared martial law."

"This is truly harassment. They want to stop me, harass me, persecute me because of my commitment to Poe," Rufus Rodriguez said in an impassioned speech at the press conference.

"I'm ready to go to jail to show people that this administration are only effective, but is also vindictive," he said.

Demetrios, a former chair of the Commission on Elections, and Rodriguez, a former immigration commissioner, withdrew as lawyers for Poe after the PNP lodged the criminal charges against them Thursday in connection with the supposed abduction of Tadjo Sadona Ukli.

Serious illegal detention is now considered a heinous and nonbailable offense and could mean the death penalty for offenders. Grave coercion is punishable by a jail sentence of six months.

(FULL STORY A10)

Pondo ng Pinoy: 25¢ for the poor

By Blanche S. Rivera and Peachy L. Tiongson
Contributors

"MAHIT BANG KATSING?" is sung by Noel Cabangon and the Children's Cathedral Choir during the recent launching of the Pondo ng Pinoy project at the Folk Arts Theater.

THE CHURCH is building a foundation for the poor on 25 centavos.

Picking up from the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the archdiocese of Manila launched on June 13 the Pondo ng Pinoy, a community foundation that will be supported by 25-centavo donations to the parishes in 23 dioceses covered by the archdiocesan province of Manila.

The project encourages all Catholics to set aside 25 centavos daily for the foundation, whose aim is to support projects of nongovernment organizations and provide the people an alternative to assessing their welfare to politicians.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales said Pondo ng Pinoy would bring about not only the developments of the Filipino people, especially the poor, but also a miraculous transformation of the country.

Addressing some 9,000 people gathered at the Folk Arts Theater for the Quiapo Manila Interfaith General Prayer Assembly, Rosales said the foundation would replace the government funds that should be used for the public welfare but were being consumed by politicians.

He cited a study by the World Bank showing that 40 percent of the Philippines' annual budget was being lost to graft and corruption. He assailed the politicians who, he said, always took advantage of the poor during elections and political rallies but subsequently ignored them.

"It is not I who condemn; only God can condemn," he said. "We cannot stop [politicians] from taking [the 40 percent through corruption, but we can

(CONTINUED, A-17)

OUTSTANDING MEDIA PRACTITIONER

Eggie Apostol is Gawad Plaridel awardee

THE INQUIRER chief of the Philippine Daily Inquirer will receive the first UP Gawad Plaridel, the only award given by the University of the Philippines to outstanding Filipino media practitioners.

Eugenio Apostol is being recognized for his groundbreaking efforts in the publication of the 4th and 5th editorial editions, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and Pinoy Times—all cited as important contributions to print journalism, the women's movement and Philippine democracy.

The award comes with a cash prize of P150,000 and a trophy by National artist Napoleon Abueva, both of which will be presented as deemed by UP officials on July 4 at 4 p.m., at the Bayanihan Ballroom of the Bantay Kalikasan.

Established by the UP College of Mass Communication (UP CMC), the Gawad Plaridel recognizes practitioners who have excelled in any of the media (print, radio, film, television and new media) and have performed with the highest level of professional integrity in the interest of public service.

The award is named for Marcelo H. del Pilar, who used the nom de plume Plaridel, and will be given out annually.

Del Pilar was the selfless propagandist whose views ability of the revolutionary newspaper La Solidaridad helped consolidate nationalist sentiment and ignite the reform ideas in the 1890s.

Like Plaridel, the recipient of the award must believe in the vision of a Philippine society that is egalitarian, participative and progressive, and its media that are socially responsible, oriented and vigilant, liberative and transformative, and free and independent.

The unanimous of the UP CMC screening committee and the final board of judges were unanimous in their belief that Apostol superbly exemplifies the highest ideals of excellence, integrity and service that the college instill continues to strive for, according to a statement issued by the award body.

UP CMC hopes that its students will be inspired to follow in Apostol's footsteps in the service of the Filipino people, it said.

The UP Gawad Plaridel is co-sponsored by the UP CMC Alumni Association, with the support of the Metrobank Foundation Inc.

INQUIRER founding chair Eugenio Apostol with former Washington Post editor Ben Bradlee when she received the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2001 Knight International Press Fellowship in Washington DC.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

NPA attacks station, kills 2 cops

By Ma. Kristina Cauyan and Franklin A. Caligan
INQ Mindanao Bureau

BUTUAN CITY—Some 20 communist rebels overran the municipal police station of Bayugan town in Agusan del Sur yesterday afternoon, killing two policemen and wounding two others, including a 15-year-old civilian, authorities said.

Bayugan acting police chief Senior Insp. Nonna Alquen told a local radio station that the New People's Army rebels, wearing police uniforms, arrived in the station on board two vans.

"We were really outmaneuvered during the harassment," Alquen said.

She said only four policemen were at the station when it was attacked.

Alquen said policemen manning the station, which is adjacent to the municipal hall, were caught off-guard.

The slain officers were identified as PO2 Marlito Cortes and PO1 Roy Ignotio.

"Wounded were PO1 Jojiebo Aurand John Cha a third man, a civilian, who was at the station during the attack.

PO2 Leo Libres, the police station's supply officer and the rebels ran amok after stealing a service and carted away their M-14 assault rifles and three M-16 assault rifles.

As the rebels fled, they continued to fire on the civilians. It was not clear whether the slain policemen were killed during the initial attack or as the rebels were leaving.

Other policemen who were off duty responded and killed two of the fleeing rebels.

They also recovered two firearms from the slain NPA rebels whose bodies were brought to a funeral parlor in the town.

Senior Supt. Ramon Rapatan, Agusan police director, said the 2:30 p.m. attack, which was timed with the observance of national hero Jose Rizal's 143rd birth anniversary, was obvious. It was planned because the rebels put up at least three blocking forces.

One group manned the border of Bayugan and Sibagat town, another group was posted in Barangay Ganaderia to Bayugan, while a third group was posted in the inquiry area in Barangay Mat-i.

Rizalized the rebels' maneuvers, ordered Rapatan said pursuit reinforcements from the Army's 402nd Infantry Brigade, the police's regional mobile group here and the Army's 23rd Infantry Brigade in Prosperidad were getting ready.

Earlier, the Army's 36th Infantry Battalion flagged down a news van of the ABS-CBN network who refused to cover the raid.

Rapatan said the rebels told the crew to leave since you behind before entering Bayugan.

Rapatan said reinforcing government troops failed to engage the rebels in any heavy firefight.

As of press time, the firefight along the roads leading to Bayugan was still ongoing, forcing traffic in the area.

Rapatan said the attackers were presumed to have come from Sanguco-Mt Diu.

The 402nd Reinforcement Battalion originated command confirmed that its forces were involved in the raid.

A communist spokesperson said they would later issue a statement about the details of the attack, which was the first major raid in the region this year.

Police stations and military detachments have intensified the stages of communist rebels.

In late 2001, a large group of rebels staged a daylong daylight attack on the San Juan town police station and looted away 15 firearms of various calibers, ammunition and communication equipment.

US-based group condemns killing of RP journalists

THE NEW York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on Saturday condemned the killing of a crusading radio journalist in the northern Philippines and urged the government to solve the crime.

Klaire Rivera was the second Filipino journalist killed this year. He was gunned down by two men acting on motorcycles on Thursday in Bislangan town near General Santos City.

Rivera, a commentator and manager of a local radio station, had frequently criticized Bislangan Mayor Teodoro Oaks-aida over alleged corruption. Last week, Oaks-aida followed to the office of Pedrosello attended Rivera's in a restaurant, police said.

"The Philippines remains dam to be the country that respects press freedom while journalists are killed with impunity," said CPJ executive director Ann Cooper.

"We call on Philippine authorities to investigate Ely Rivera's murder and bring them responsible to justice."

Rivera was the second journalist to be murdered in the Philippines so far this year. In February, Karl Kalaud, a commentator on radio station dyRC, was shot and killed in Legazpi City.

The CPJ said 40 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since democracy was restored in 1986, including five in 2003. So one has been prosecuted for any of those murders.AFP

'Running priest' wants 'slowest polls' in Guinness

By Veh Contreras

WHEN a running marathon professor down that the last Philippine election as possibly the "slowest in the world," personal governmental critic Fr. Robert Reyes, aka The Running Priest, took that as his cue.

Yesterday, Reyes e-mailed the Guinness Book of World Records to ask the file-based body to certainly consider the observation of Fr. Reyes further and grant the country the dubious honor in its annals of the universe.

"May I humbly submit to your office the entry application of the Philippines as the country with the 'slowest elections in the World?'" the priest stated. He furnished the Inquirer a copy of his e-mail.

"This adds to an already known record of the country with a first lady [Imelda Marcos] who owns 3,000 pairs of shoes and controlling underpassers," he wrote.

"We hope that your inclusion with the said title will not only embarrass but [initiate] immediate all of us serve to allow such a regrettable embarrassment to happen to our beloved country again," he said.

Reyes, running as an officer of the dangled advocacy group Bantay-poll, sent his application to info@guinnessworld.com.

He explained to Guinness that as of yesterday, the congressional canvass for the presidential and vice presidential elections was still ongoing, 10 days after the May 10 election.

"By Monday, when the canvass commencing, it will be 42 days after the elections without the slightest indication that the end is in sight," he pointed out.

Reyes, parish priest of the Our Lady of the Abandoned since 1986-88 parish in Project 4, Quezon City, said he had wanted to enter Guinness three weeks ago, but some of his friends asked him not to.

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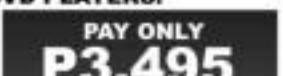

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FPJ followers to go to court over rally permits

By Nikko Dizon

STILL fuming from a violent clash with police near Malacañang the other day, supporters of opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. are set to question before the Supreme Court the refusal of local authorities to grant them rally permits.

They declared their intention yesterday even as they condemned the Palace, the Manila city government and the Philippine National Police for imposing an "unwarranted martial law" on pro-FPJ rallyists.

In a press conference in Quezon City, FPJ for President Movement head Manny Pinto said a petition for mandamus is being prepared by Bishop-at-Tuesday.

Joining Pintos were about a dozen lawyers led by Jose Luis "Linggoy" Alcuaz, who claimed that last Friday's rally on Mendiola Bridge near "massive demonstrators" and bystanders being beaten down and hit with clubs-by police.

The police also were reported to briefly "threatened" some rally participants from Tondo and Tagaytay just as they were assembling in their barangays and preparing to leave for Manila, they alleged.

Pinto was one of those key allies accused of "kidnapping" last week by Ocampo Andrews Hall, Sr., an election official from Bataan. Lim said Poe's lawyers tried to summon her to testify against the administration on alleged poll fraud.

The charge, filed with the National Bureau of Investigation, also implicated Poe's lawyers in the ongoing congressional canvass, prompting them to walk out of the proceedings Friday night. They denounced the charge as outright "harassment" by the Macapagal administration.

Pintos said the timing of the recent dispersal, the kidnapping charges and the denial of rally permits sought by the pro-FPJ camp pointed to a "grand design" to suppress the "truth" about the recent presidential elections.

In the same breath, Edwin Olaguil of Kusama-Pilipina said another protest action is planned for this week, adding: "It [it] a matter of gathering one million people in Luneta to proclaim a President, so be it."

Bolaguil said in the next rally, they will urge us by "mass creation" including with the police.

Asked to elaborate, he said Poe supporters coming from the slums, for example, daily be asked to "dress up like the rich so that they were less likely to be beaten up."

Bro. Eddie concedes 'to people, not to gov't'

BAGUIO CITY—Members of the Bangon Pilipinas party are sticking by their candidate, Bro. Eddie Villanueva, in his criticism of the ongoing congressional canvass for the presidential and vice presidential contest.

Pastor William Guerrero, Bangon Pilipinas coordinator here, said Villanueva was pursuing his accusation of fraud to clean up the political system, which he set out to do when he ran for president.

Villanueva, who apparently finished fourth in the presidential race, has already conceded defeat, "but only to the people and not the government," Guerrero said.

Guerrero was responding to a group of pastors here who publicly criticized Villanueva's June 17 "prayer rally to condemn national fraud" and urged him to stop criticizing the 22-member joint congressional committee conducting the canvass as a press conference here last Friday.

The pastors, representing eight Baguio City-based ministries that supported Villanueva's candidacy, urged the evangelist to concede defeat and stop agitating against the canvass to avoid being associated with the alleged dozens of losers among the losing presidential candidates.

Accepted on May 18

In a press statement, Villanueva said he had "taken note" of the pastors' statement and would "personally cherish their sojourn" in the next meeting of the Bangon Pilipinas executive committee.

He said he had accepted "so early as May 18" that he "was not able to receive a mandate from the Filipino people."

But he said he "cannot in conscience just concede to any candidate," and by not conceding he was "helping the forces of truth ... to shroud the attempts to further steal votes from unsuspecting candidates."

The pastors, who had financially supported Villanueva's candidacy, said they were public in castigating Villanueva to resume his "self-destructing" ways.

"We respect their opinions but they could have raised these issues in a less public forum. These are statements which lagged off from campaigning openly because their churches have become churches from becoming political," said Rolando Suzuki Quilala, a pastor of the Community Christian Fellowship.

Talk to God

Quilala, Soriano, pastor of the Sodom Set Free Movement, and Villanueva's usual posture of reconciliation had been replaced by confrontation.

"We do not condemn ... to prayer rallies. We talk to God," Acosta said.

The pastors warned Villanueva that if he persisted, they might be compelled to support another evangelical candidate for President in 2010.

Most of the pastors who attended the press briefing here said they were disgusted by the actions of Villanueva's lawyers, Lito Lorenzana and Salvador Panelo.

"On the beginning, we interposed no objections to the inclusion of Panelo in the legal panel of Bangon. But ... [he] became unnecessarily and resorted to grandstanding which created delays in the canvassing," said the pastors in a press statement.

They said they were not sure whether Panelo was acting as a counsel for Villanueva or for senator Fernando Poe Jr.

Quilala said Bangon Pilipinas should focus instead on its organizational problems.

The pastors said the party should begin drawing up legislative and organizational measures to strengthen the party in preparation for the 2010 presidential race.

Evangelist Bolaandar (2001) noted that Bangon Pilipinas had run a campaign claiming it could generate 10 million votes.

"It is the people who believed we could get 10 million votes who are more [disappointed] and who are passionate about topics that we were donated," Lopez said. Vincent Cabreza, Phil Sorcham Jason Ranada

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RP strengthens OIC ties even as observer bid fails

By Jeremie Reing

JOHOR If the Philippines failed to win bid to get a permanent observer seat in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, its-ups Al-Haj Secretary Delia Albert said the country's efforts led to stronger relations with individual member states of the OIC.

"Our relations and ministry officials have not only grown due to a greater understanding of peace dividends that would come about as a result of being an observer, but there is now even greater determination between the Philippines and individual OIC members to boost relations," Albert said in a statement from Istanbul, Turkey, where she attended a summit of OIC foreign ministers early this week.

The delegation to the OIC that Albert led succeeded only in securing "an exclusive formal endorsement" of the Philippine bid for OIC observer status from Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda during one of the plenary sessions.

Albert said the country does not intend support from 34 OIC foreign ministers and heads of delegations that she spoke with.

But she said her meetings with these officials not only centered on the Philippine bid for observer status but on economic and trade issues, security and intelligence cooperation, the protection and welfare of overseas Filipinos as well as issues pending before the United Nations Security Council.

"I was deeply touched not only by the many offers of unequivocal support for our candidature in the OIC, but also by the close and sincere desire of many members of the OIC to deepen their engagement with the Philippines," she said.

Albert said she was able to refer to the current dangerous positive developments on the security situation in Mindanao and on the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front.

She said the OIC was able to determine that the Philippines was in full compliance with the agreement, having completed the first phase dealing with the normalization and political situation.

She said the Philippines was making progress in implementing the second, or socioeconomic phase, of the agreement.

An OIC body called the Committee of the Eight which is chaired by Indonesia, is in charge of monitoring the enforcement of the peace pact.

The OIC earlier blasted lack of time and the absence of clear provisions on admission criteria as the main reasons why the Philippines application was not tackled.

OIC delegates were busily campaigning for the election of the next secretary general, which was won by Turkey and holding other important issues such as Iraq, Palestine and Cyprus.

"There was no shelving or rejection of the bid. There was simply no chance at all to tackle the application. No political reasons, however, were involved," foreign affairs undersecretary Jose Brillantes said the other day.

The deferment wasted months of hard diplomatic work by Albert.

SHELTERING SKIES
A United States Air Force plane takes cover as the heroic US airbase at Clark yesterday as a large and very powerful Typhoon Meari (international name: Chaemi) narrowed toward Okinawa in southern Japan, the site of a major US base.

Wanted: 25,000 workers for Iraq

By Jeremie Reing

A Mideast company helping in the reconstruction of Iraq wants to hire some 25,000 workers, preferably Filipinos, in the next two to three years.

Imelda Regencia, spokesman of the Philippine government's recruitment agency Iraq Team, said Prime Projects International needs more workers for support services for the military units and construction companies in Iraq after the country re-acquires its sovereignty on June 30.

Dubai-based PPI is one of the subcontractors of Bechtel Brown & Root, a division of the Halliburton Companies. KBR were majority of the big contracts offered by the US-led coalition for reconstruction projects in Iraq.

"As an ally of the coalition, our OFWs are the preferred workers in Iraq," Regencia said yesterday.

PPI employs most of the 4,000 overseas Filipino workers, who are deployed in various military camps, bases and other facilities run by the coalition.

Regencia said KBR recently asked Iraq Team chief Ambassador Roy Cimatu to consider lifting the temporary ban on the deployment of OFWs to Iraq. The ban was imposed while the team reviews the security situation of OFWs in Iraq.

"We have to get our act together so that we can avail of the opportunity of more jobs for our OFWs. Otherwise, they would be offered to other third countries like India and Nepal," Regencia said.

OFWs, both from the Philippines and other Middle East countries, are lured to Iraq because of higher salary and benefits.

Regencia said that in some Middle East countries, employees get an average wage of $200 a month; Iraq is Iraq, they could receive upto $700 a month and other benefits.

The family of one of the OFWs who died in Iraq would receive $260,000 in insurance compensation, he said.

Regencia, however, admitted that despite the ban, OFWs are still able to travel to Iraq.

"They and their would be employers are rather resourceful," he said, recounting that companies are recruiting Filipinos from Middle East countries where the ban would not be enforced. This is compounded by the fact that the Iraqi government currently do not require non-the foreign workers.

The only deployment which the government could halt are those coming from the Philippines, which has already reached more 12,000 all under pending status.

"The only thing we could do is to at least appeal to OFWs already in or going to Iraq to at least register at our embassy in Baghdad so that we would know about their whereabouts and inform them of our contingency measures and other developments," Regencia said.

Corrections

THE MUSEO La Mundo Mission College of Law will hold its homecoming on June 25, not 26, as erroneously stated in the caption that appeared in Lifestyle, Page 1E, last Friday.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th Building, Orion Bataan Avenue corner Mercurio Street, Mariveles, Bataan 2105; fax 981-8703/04; e-mail address gerlir@inquirer.com.ph and dayshift@inquirer.com.ph.

Complainants without lack of full name or capacity may be sent to Atty. Rolando Victoria, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor and e-mail address rvictoria@inquirer.com.ph.

Pope names 2 bishops

POPE John Paul II yesterday appointed two bishops — for Iba, Zambales and Palo, Leyte.

Fr. Florentino Lavarias, 47, who is in charge of the formation seminary program of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, is the new bishop of Iba.

He succeeds Bishop Deogracias Iniguez who has been transferred to Calbayog City.

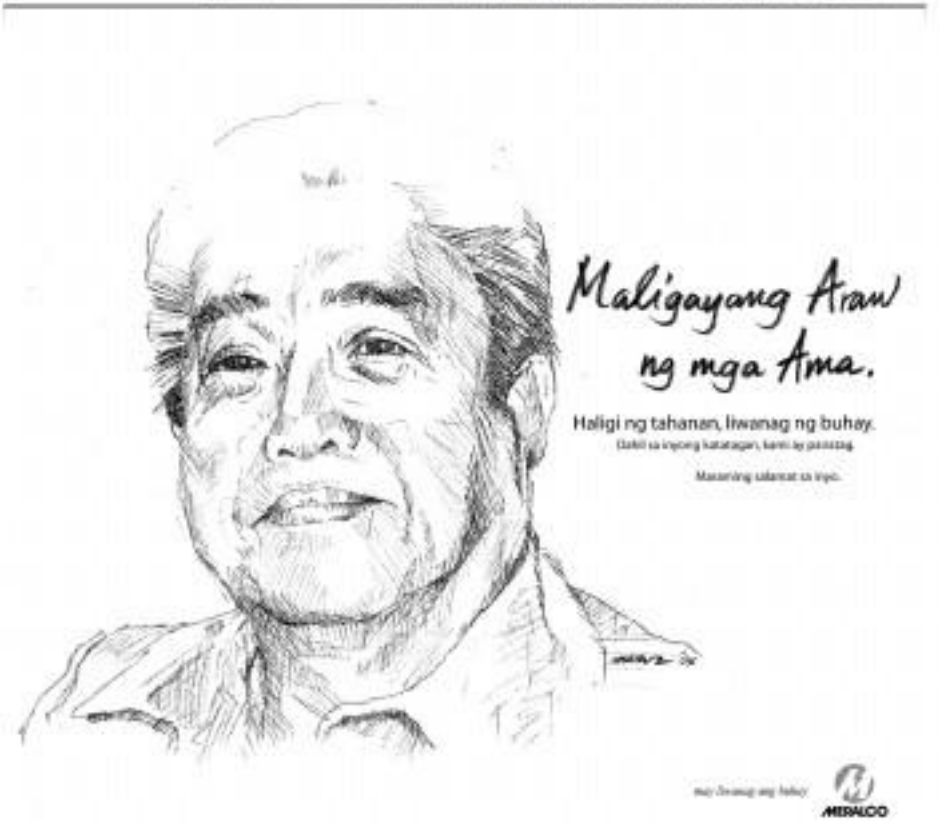
At the same time, the Pope appointed Bishop Isabelo Abacayan as the auxiliary bishop of Iloilo.

Abacayan was an auxiliary bishop of Cebu under Cardinal Ricardo Vidal.

Lavarias announced was made yesterday but no date has been set for the installation of both bishops.

Lavarias studied at the San Carlos Seminary and was ordained in 1985. He served as the director of the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary in San Fernando, Pampanga, for six years.

In the CBCP he was in charge of the formative vocational programs, an ongoing formation program for priests. — Marvin P. Mer



Ombudsman: P1B needed to fight graft

By Armand N. Nocum

A BILLION pesos.

That's what it would take to win the war against graft and corruption, according to Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo. He said he hopes to use the success of the Bantay Kotong program to convince Congress and Malacañang to release more funds to the Ombudsman's office.

With a billion pesos from the government and the support of the private sector, Marcelo said he was optimistic they would succeed in the fight against graft in two year's time.

In a recent interview, Marcelo said the government and business groups had set as much into shelves with financial assistance to fight graft, which according to World Bank estimates, cost Filipino taxpayers P1.2 billion in the past two-and-a-half decades.

In its present state, "the anti-graft office is bound to fail. As I see it, it was never given sufficient resources to do its job," Marcelo said.

Like a war

Included in the Ombudsman's wish list are hundreds of new prosecutors and graft investigators who could be assigned all over the country.

"It's like a war; I need men," he said.

Although the "official battle" against graft is played out in the halls of the Sandiganbayan, Marcelo revealed that he wanted his office to rely only 30 prosecutors attending to more than 2,000 graft cases, and 27 graft investigators searching over 1.3 million government officials and employees.

It was only during the present administration that they were allowed to hire 30 more prosecutors. Only recently was his office allowed to hire 35 more graft investigators, he said.

This is why anytime Hong Kong's famed Independent Commission Against Graft (ICAC), which has 800 investigators watchdogs over 175,000 bureaucrats.

The government wants to replicate the work of ICAC, which is credited with cubbing Hong Kong of graft, its founding head, Tony Kevin, now serves as a consultant of the government's Lifestyle Check Committee.

Graft prevention

With over a billion pesos in their hands, Marcelo said they could field more key prosecutors' effort all over the country to people must run to them when they are "being harassed" while applying for business permits, securing land titles or value government transactions.

He said these steps can stop graft even before actual graft charges are ever made. "Graft prevention first, that's how to fight to petty graft," he said, adding that only big and serious cases need to reach the Sandiganbayan.

But with these present resources, he said they must be content with doing "surgical strikes" in the three most corrupt offices of the government: the Department of Public Works and Highways, Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue.

He said they were concentrating on these three offices because they had to be "pragmatic" and use limited resources too thinly, a problem that afflicts just administration of the Ombudsman.

HORSING AROUND
He dropping mall rides for this father and his two children having some quality time in the run-up to today's celebration of Father's Day at the UP Sunken Garden. JOAN BONDOC

Firm denies being behind 'Imelda'

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE LAWYER of Bristol Productions Inc., which former first lady Imelda Marcos named as the local distributor of the award-winning documentary "Imelda," yesterday denied the company had anything to do with the film.

United counsel Pete Abante Jr. filed an urgent motion to dismiss Marcos' petition seeking a stop to the screening of the film in the Philippines, saying "we were not the ones who produced and distributed the film."

Abante said Bristol "primarily made commercials and advertisements."

Abante had asked the Makati Regional Trial Court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the public screening of the 110-minute film.

Abante's lawyer Vic Alonzo said they will further investigate Bristol's claim.

"Mrs. Marcos herself has complained against United Productions Inc. only on newspaper reports," Alonzo told reporters.

"The only shows that she does not know anything about the films and did not give her consent for its screening," Alonzo added.

He said they wanted to stop the local screening of the film, scheduled to be shown beginning July 7, because "it is a mockery of Mr. Marcos' image."

The Daily Gospel

Saturday, June 20, 2004
12th Saturday in Ordinary Time
Father's Day

1st Reading: Sir 48:1-14

I still preserve me the words of Sirach and the admonition of Jerusalem a spirit of love and supplication. Were still fresh in the one who was powerful and secure for him are the only child, escaping bloody as for a firebrand. The mountain of Jerusalem will be as green as the mountain of Bashan known to the prince of Megiddo.

Gospel: Mt 6:7-15

"Not so, or Christ Jesus, all of you are sons and daughters of God through faith. All of you who were given to Christ through baptism, have put on Christ. Here there is no longer any difference between Jew or Greek, or between slave or freed, or between male and woman, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And because you belong to Christ, you are of Abraham's race and you are to inherit God's promises."

Gospel: Lk 9:18-24

One day when Jesus was praying alone, and his friends his disciples, he asked them, "What do people say about me?" And they answered, "Some say that you are John the Baptist, others say that you are one of the former prophets who has risen from the dead." Again Jesus asked them, "Who then do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God." Then Jesus spoke to them, giving them strict orders not to tell this to anyone.

And he added, "The Son of Man must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the elders and chief priests and teachers of the law, and put to death. Three days later he will be raised to life."

Jesus also said to all the people, "If you wish to be followers of mine, deny yourself and take up your cross each day, and follow me. For if you decide to save your life, you will lose it, and if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it."

Commentary

Today is Father's Day. Let's think about fathers. Fathers are not what they used to be. A study conducted in some US cities some years ago revealed that fathers spend an average of eight minutes a day talking with their children. In childhood we have a fascinating chronicle to tell the father does not work that's. We plan to the lives of his children is fascinating for and has the things home the enemy. But his children have no knowledge of a companion for his work-friends, TV and television frequently portray him as an important citizen. Add to this the vague to psychology for blaming all one's own ills on one's parents, and the father is cast down further.

In the New Testament, the image of father is far removed from the stern disciplinarian father of the Old Testament and the abusive father of today. It is full of joy, service and affection. In the story of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15), for example, the father waited out to greet his wayward son, draped him in his arms and kissed him. Jesus Jesus himself warmly loved by his Father. So the Father that loved me, as I have loved you." (Jn 15:9). The first that we can ever imagine what this was like means that the image of father is not dead to us.

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Supreme Court Doctrines

CIVIL LAW — Laches — The court cannot accept petitioner's arguments that respondent is guilty of laches. Laches, in its real sense, is not failure or neglect, for an unreasonable and unexplained length of time, to do that which, by exercising due diligence, could or should have been done earlier; it is negligence or omission to assert a right within a reasonable time, warranting a presumption that the party entitled to assert it either has abandoned or declined to assert it. Respondent learned of the contract only in February 1984 after the death of his father, and in the court case, during November, he invoked the validity of the agreements. Hardly could respondent then be said to have neglected to assert his rights for unreasonable length of time. (Andres Gorgs, Trust Investors, Shopper's Paradise Realty & Development Corp., vs. Elena F. Nagac, G.R. No. 140772, January 15, 2004)

By R. B. Tuaz

Boots firm workers sue AFP over unpaid wages

By Fe B. Zamora

WORKERS of the subcontracted Goodfit Manufacturing Co., a maker of combat boots, have sued the Armed Forces of the Philippines for non-payment of their wages and separation benefits, one of the firm's supervisors told the Inquirer yesterday.

The complaint for non-payment of salaries followed another complaint filed in December 2003 over the failure of Goodfit management to remit the workers' contributions to the Social Security System for almost two years.

AFP chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya confirmed that the workers had not been paid their salaries since December because the company was bankrupt.

"We are working on a way to distribute the assets of Goodfit among the creditors, employees and employees," Abaya said.

When the workers will be paid, however, "will depend on the court," he said.

But he said he had already ordered Goodfit to settle the workers' remittances to the SSS. Phil Health and Pag-ibig Fund.

"Maybe they should also check that themselves," Abaya advised the workers.

Protection

He said he approved the closure of Goodfit to protect the soldiers' money in the AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS).

"Goodfit has been on existing trouble since 1997. It is losing millions yearly," Abaya said.

Goodfit general manager Brig. Gen. Celso Castro is on sick leave to answer accusations the workers they would be paid.

"Definitely they will be paid," he said.

He said Goodfit would need about P15 million for the salaries of some 120 workers.

The case filed by Goodfit is the latest twist in the controversy involving the AFP over alleged irregularities in the bidding for combat boots for the Philippine Army.

Abaya had admitted that a cartel has been in control of the AFP logistics system for decades, but he maintained that Filbest Manufacturing Corp., the company that won the latest bidding although it submitted the highest price for the boots, was awarded the contract based on standards set by the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management.

Flawed bidding

Julius Cortiga Jacinto, a losing bidder, maintained the bidding was flawed since Filbest submitted the highest bid at P1,047 per pair, Jacinto bidded at a bid of P950.50 per pair, while Gilmore Manufacturing, another bidder, offered the boots at P1,038 a pair.

Goodfit, which won the former Ang Tibay shoe company, was acquired by the AFP in 1997 after it failed to pay its loans to the RSBS. It never bankrupt last April 30 after 17 years of manufacturing combat boots and other footwear for soldiers and policemen.

Asuncion Victorio, a Goodfit shoe-room supervisor, said they filed their complaint with the Department of Labor and Employment on June 14. They had gone to the Dole in April to complain, but they were advised to get a lawyer first, he said.

Victorio said that in December 2003, he was ordered by Goodfit management to prepare the supporting documents for the purchase of materials for 30,000 pairs of "hot weather combat boots" for the Marines and for the AFP Logistics Command.

From imported to local

The materials—which were supposedly—were delivered in January, but when they were about to start making the boots, the "specs were changed from imported to local materials."

"And the number of boots ordered was less than 30,000 pairs," Victorio said. He said he could not understand why the specs were changed after the materials were purchased.

"Director Cortes promised that we would be paid our salaries after the materials have been delivered, but this did not materialize," Renato Bantayanihan, assistant storeroom supervisor, said.

Victorio blamed the AFP for continuing to Goodfit's bankruptcy.

"They set up the company to manufacture boots for the soldiers, but they refused boots from other companies. Why didn't they support Goodfit?" Victorio said.

He said that from the late 80's to the early 90's, Goodfit supplied the boots for the GI troops in the American bases at Clark and Subic. He said the US also ordered boots which were given to the AFP under the Service Supply Agreement provided for under the Mutual Defense Treaty.

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Notice is hereby given that, as ordered by the Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 46, in its order dated June 17, 2004 in Civil Case No. 03-107596, the Annual Stockholdersí Meeting of Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corporation will be held on Tuesday, June 22, 2004, at the Manila Pavilion Hotel in U.N. Avenue, Ermita, Manila at ten oí clock in the morning (10:00 AM).

GAUDENCIO A. PALAFOX
Counsel for Plaintiff

Supreme Court backs gun ban

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court has thrown out a legal challenge to the nationwide gun ban that President Macapagal-Arroyo declared in January 2003.

In a unanimous decision, the tribunal dismissed the petition of Francisco Chavez, a former solicitor general, which claimed that the right to bear arms was a constitutionally protected right.

"The right to bear arms is a mere statutory privilege, not a constitutional right. It is a mere statutory creation," said the ruling penned by Associate Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez.

Inalienable right

"Being a mere statutory creation, the right to bear arms cannot be considered an inalienable or absolute right," the court added.

The President declared a nationwide ban on the carrying of guns and ordered PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to cancel all existing permits to carry firearms outside the residences (PTCFOR) and to suspend the issuance of such permits.

Ebdane then issued a set of guidelines to implement the ban.

Citing United States jurisprudence, Chavez said the ban and the ensuing guidelines violated the people's right to carry firearms and protect themselves and their property.

He claimed that the President had no authority to impose the ban which illegally amended the country's gun laws.

The SC disagreed.

"Owing to the proliferation of crimes, particularly those committed by the New People's Army, which tends to disturb the peace of the community, President Arroyo deemed it best to impose a nationwide gun ban. Undeniably the motivating factor in the issuance of the assailed guidelines is the interest of the public in general," the court said.

It noted that the guidelines did not entirely prohibit the possession of firearms.

"What they prescribe is merely the carrying of firearms outside of residences. Those who wish to carry their firearms outside of their residences may re-apply for a new PTCFOR. This we believe is a reasonable regulation," the SC said.

The tribunal said a PTCFOR does not constitute a "property right protected under our Constitution."

Personal privilege

"Consequently, a PTCFOR, just like ordinary licenses in other regulated fields, may be revoked anytime. It does not confer an absolute right, but only a personal privilege to be exercised under existing restrictions," the SC said.

And even if the PTCFOR were to be considered a "property right," it cannot be considered as absolute "as to be placed beyond the reach of the State's police power," the high court said.

"All property in the state is held subject to its general regulations, necessary to the common good and general welfare," the SC said.

It noted that even the US Supreme Court had ruled that the right to bear arms under the US Constitution referred to the "collective right" of those comprising local militias, or citizens enrolled for military discipline.

"It does not pertain to the individual right of (a) citizen to bear arms," the SC said.

Court junks convict's schizophrenia defense

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME has upheld the death sentence on a convict who claimed in his defense that he was suffering from schizophrenia.

In a 29-page decision, the tribunal ruled that Randy Belonio failed to prove that he was insane when he killed Ramon Tamayo on Jan. 6, 2000 in Talisay, Negros Occidental.

Insanity

"In the eyes of the law, insanity exists when there is a complete deprivation of intelligence in committing the act. Proof of the existence of some abnormality of the mental faculties will not exclude imputability, if it can be shown that the offender was not completely deprived of freedom and intelligence," the SC said.

The tribunal ordered Belonio to pay his victim's heirs P1.4 million in damage and to reimburse them for loss of earnings.

Court records showed that Belonio bumped into Tamayo in a neighborhood store in Talisay on Jan. 6, 2000. He gave Tamayo a hard and resentful look, sat beside him and even talked to him. He then stabbed the victim with an improvised knife, the SC said.

Well-aware

The court ruled that Belonio was well aware of the crime he had committed and was "capable of distinguishing right from wrong."

The SC dismissed the contention of defense witness, Dr. Antonio Gamon, who said that the convict was suffering from schizophrenia.

It said that the evidence of insanity after the commission of the crime may be accorded weight only "if there is also proof of alleged abnormal behavior immediately before or simultaneous to the commission of the crime."

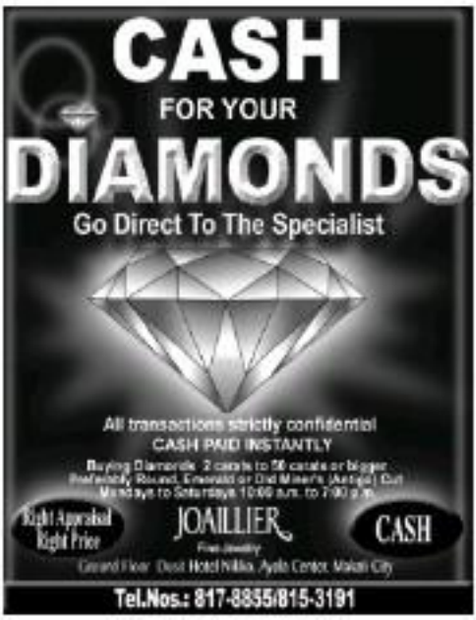
The court said Gamon did not say if Belonio was actually suffering from schizophrenia when he killed Tamayo.

Manipulative

The SC also noted the testimony of Dr. Ester Regina Servando, the prosecution's expert witness who found that Belonio was "totally capable of being manipulative or evasive."

Belonio's crime was also aggravated by treachery and recidivism, the SC said.

It noted that Belonio had a previous conviction for homicide.



The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Casalmo

Russia warned US on Saddam's plan to attack US targets—Putin

KUALA—Russia warned the United States after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks that Iraq's Saddam Hussein planned to hit targets on US soil, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday.

Putin's remarks looked certain to help US President George W. Bush, but officials in the US State Department were not immediately forthcoming, saying they knew of no such information from Russia.

Putin said Russian intelligence had been told on several occasions that Saddam's special forces were preparing to attack US targets inside and outside the United States.

"After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and before the start of the military operation in Iraq, Russian special services several times received information that the officials of the Saddam regime were preparing 'terrorist acts' on the United States and beyond its borders," he told reporters.

"The information was passed on to our American colleagues," he said. He added, however, that Russian intelligence had not proof that Saddam's agents had been involved in any particular attack.

State department spokesperson Adam Ereli told reporters his office did not know anything about the information that Putin said Russia passed on. No such information was communicated from Russia through the state department, he said.

"Everybody's scrambling their heads," said one state department official, who asked not to be named.

But the Kremlin leader's comments seemed certain to bolster Bush, whose campaign for reelection in November is under pressure from Democrats.

Bush has been on the defensive at home for running—against the findings of an independent commission—that Saddam had links with al-Qaeda, the militant group behind the 2001 airline attacks in the United States that killed nearly 3,000 people and prompted the US war on terrorism.

Putin's remarks were all the more unusual since Russia had diplomatic relations with Saddam's Iraq and sided with France and Germany in opposing the invasion.

Speaking to reporters in the capital of ex-Soviet Kazakhstan, he went out of his way, however, to say Russia's view of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq was unchanged.

"Our position has not changed. We indeed passed this information on to our American partners but we consider that there are ways, defined by international law, for solving force on international affairs and these procedures were not observed," he said. Reuters

STEVIE Wonder sings and ria Ste. Robert Robinson Sr. (right), son of Ray Charles, sings along during funeral services for Ray Charles at First AME Church in Los Angeles. AP

US hostage beheaded; suspected brains killed

GEORGE W. Bush, who declared war on al-Qaeda after a deadly Saudi group attacked the United States on Sept. 11 three years ago, "America will not be intimidated by these kinds of wicked things." AP

RIYADH—Al-Qaeda militants in Saudi Arabia beheaded American hostage Paul Johnson on Friday and their leader was then killed in a shootout with security forces as he tried to dispose of the body, Saudi officials said.

Abdulaziz al-Muqrin's group posted photographs of the 49-year-old retired engineer's severed head on a website on six days after he was seized. The Saudi government had refused to free Islamist prisoners by a Friday deadline set by the cell.

Minutes afterwards, as Muqrin and two other top militants tried to depart Johnson's body in the capital Riyadh, they were surrounded by Saudi security men and gunned down, a security source said.

Muqrin, a angry young man driven by revenge and hatred for the US and its Arab allies, was Osama bin Laden's most trusted al-Qaeda leader. His death will be portrayed as a major blow to Riyadh here because he was also the kingdom's most wanted militant, once choked by their US ally as long ago as seventeen.

"This is a very prompt and telling demonstration of their (Saudi) commitment to defeating al-Qaeda. We are pleased to see this issue is done," a US state department official said.

Johnson was the third American each killed in Riyadh in the past 18 days, prompting up pressure on Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter and the Saudi royal family, which Bin Laden has sworn to overthrow for its close alliance with Washington.

"They're trying to get us to return from the world. America will not retreat," said President George W. Bush, who declared war on al-Qaeda after a deadly Saudi group attacked the United States on Sept. 11 three years ago. "America will not be intimidated by these kinds of wicked things."

Vice President Dick Cheney said: "Militants will learn about the killers one by one and deal with them."

The US Embassy said more attacks were likely and the state department warned Americans of a risk of violence across the Gulf region after urging many to leave Saudi Arabia last week.

"As we promised, the militants, we have beheaded the American hostage Paul Marshall after the deadline that the mujahideen gave to the tyrannical Saudi government passed," the Saffron Brigade of the Organization of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula said on its website, using Johnson's first names.

Knowingly had it appeared Jon Muqrin and fellow fugitives, assisted by al-Saddam helicopter as hovering. Faisal and Bandar al-Saddam, were gunned down in the al-Malaza area of Riyadh.

Special forces backed by helicopter gunboat al-Malaza into the night. They ran fire mounted a building, searching it and making arrests before dashing with Muqrin and his comrades.

The website carried three pictures of what looked like Johnson's severed head—one showed the bloodied head propped up on the back of a body in an orange, US prison overalls, a passport next to him, leaning on the mutilated face.

Militant sources have affirmed the birthplace of Islam for more than a year but this was the first such kidnapping in Saudi Arabia and underscored security of a new law. Two other Americans and an Irish cameraman have been shot dead in Riyadh this month.

Beheading prisoners or cutting their throats has been a shock tactic among al-Qaeda militants for some time—American Nick Berg was filmed as he was killed in Iraq last month, as was Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002.

Like Johnson, his captors demand Berg in orange, the color worn by al-Qaeda suspects held by US forces at Guantanamo Bay. Reuters

Asian leaders condemn killing

BANGKOK—Islamic leaders in the world's most populous Muslim nation Saturday joined worldwide condemnation over the beheading of US hostage Paul Johnson, but at least one radical Indonesian figure blamed the killing on American foreign policy.

Elsewhere in Asia, Australian Prime Minister John Howard described the death as the "cruelest of acts" and one unbreakable justification.

All decent people will be appalled at the callous beheading of the United States hostage in Saudi Arabia, Paul Johnson," Howard said in a statement. "It is a sickening murder of both the law and behavior of international terrorism."

Johnson, chair of the Muqrin Rajabalee Indonesia, a radical Islamic group once headed by jailed terror suspect Abu Bakar Bashir, said the killings would continue unless the United States withdrew Iraq and Afghanistan and stops attacks in Palestinian territory.

"The killing of innocent people is wrong," he was said. "But it is a result of the United States policies in the Middle East," he said.

Other moderate Islamic leaders in Indonesia, however, said Johnson's death would do little to influence US Middle East policy.

"We have to condemn these kinds of incidents," said Agustinus di Asta, a Muslim scholar at the National Islamic University in Jakarta.

"We understand that certain and groups have Americans because of what they see as to outside or unjust policies in that was against terrorism," Asta said. "At the same time, we campaign that we make civilian targets. The will only create more violence and would solve the problem. It will only strengthen the American resolve."

Johnson, 49, an engineer who had worked in Saudi Arabia for more than a decade, was kidnapped last weekend by militants who followed through on a threat to kill him by Friday if the Saudi kingdom did not release its al-Qaeda prisoners. An al-Qaeda group claiming responsibility posted an Internet message that showed grisly photographs of a beheaded body Friday. AP

Johnson's small US town shocked, mourning

FLORIDA Wanta and her son Blake, 4, of Port St. John, Florida, place a candle and a US flag in front of the home of Paul Johnson III's home in Port St. John, Florida. REUTERS

EAGLESPOOKE, New Jersey—The small town where US executive Paul Johnson grew up was in shock and mourning Saturday after learning that he had been killed by a group that he had come to love.

Islamic militants showed gloating pictures of his body in a pool of blood, his head placed on his back. In the United States, the Drudge Report, a popular conservative news website, also carried the photographs.

Johnson, who was kidnapped last weekend, had lived in Saudi Arabia for 10 years. He worked for Lockheed Martin as an Apache helicopter engineering engineer.

For the past days yellow ribbons, usually strung up in honor of soldiers deployed abroad, have been tied to lamp posts and trees on the main street of this working class town in the north of New Jersey near the Atlantic Ocean.

On the eve of the executive deadline last Thursday, about 100 people gathered to pray and hold candles at a service hosted by Emanuel Sunday chaplain of the Englewood Boys Co.

But with the announcement Friday of the beheading of this businessman's relatives, lively had turned into sadness.

"They have his small town America," he said. "They don't even know to their own people," he added, referring to a Saudi appeal to end the killing of non-Muslims on the kingdom soil.

Close to the edge of the town, Johnson's modest, stone and adult son spent most of Friday in seclusion at the family home.

Later in the day they left the house, escorted by plain clothes police officers who held up pads so as they entered a vehicle to protect their from a posse of reporters and some of cameras aimed in their direction.

Federal Bureau of Investigation special agent Joseph Billy said a family statement to reporters.

"We thank everyone for the outpouring of support," Billy said. "Paul considered Saudi Arabia as his home. He loved the people and the country. These people are christians, they don't represent Saudi Arabia as the spoke about it."

On a tail of a nearby house hung a sign that read: "Our thoughts and prayers are with the Johnson family."

"Pray for the Johnsons" read other signs attached to electricity power poles. As signs of solidarity, some residents were borrow that said: "Our words can't be dead true but our voices are deep."

Some residents were upset that Johnson had even gone to Saudi Arabia.

"This isn't the first one, this won't be the last one," said Barry Stone, 58, a neighbor whose son, currently based in Sweden, Texas, plans to work for the oil services company Halliburton, which has extensive contracts in Iraq.

His says she understands that people want to work abroad because there is a lack of jobs in the United States. But she does not want her son to go.

At Berkeley, the town pub, all the television sets are tuned to Cable News Network.

"This is what happens when we try to police the world," said Jane in his 40s who refused to give his name. The man said he voted for Bush in the 2000 election but will not yet ready to vote for Democrat John Kerry in the November presidential election. "I'll see the Bush, or Moore," he said. AP

UN raises pressure on Iran as suspicions deepen

VIENNA—The UN nuclear watchdog sharply rebuked Iran on Friday for failing to cooperate fully with its inspectors, as diplomats said UN investigators were pushing the possibility of Tehran was hiding another atomic site.

A resolution adopted unanimously by the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors said the board "deplores ... that there has been a lack of transparency ... and has not been as full, timely and proactive as it should have been."

IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei said he would take new issues information from him about nuclear smuggler showing the raising of buildings at a site in Tehran, saying the possibility it was hiding another atomic installation.

The United States says Iran's nuclear programs is a front for building an atomic weapon, a charge Iran denies.

The IAEA effectively resumed the ball to Iran's court, two days after President Mohammad Khatami rejected the draft resolution and said Tehran would no longer be under any moral obligation to maintain its suspension of uranium enrichment.

But examination of materials and processes of producing centrifuges for use in nuclear power plants, if carried far enough, in bombs—would provoke a major crisis.

"We're entering a very very dangerous period where Iran will be tempted to continue its enrichment program, believing the United States is paralyzed because of Iraq and the US elections and that the Europeans won't be prepared to take very tough actions over their threats to resume," said Gary Samore of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

The IAEA, the world's nuclear watchdog, has been probing Iran since August 2002 and has pushed it to be fully open with UN inspectors as they struggle to reduce the spread of weapons of mass destruction in an increasingly unstable Middle East. Reuters

EU leaders adopt historic charter

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Why do people close their eyes when kissing?

SINGAPORE—Ever wondered why many people close their eyes when they kiss?

A Singapore academic said Saturday that researchers may drop their life to unveil everlasting the answer and—just possibly—to skip the unpleasantness of seeing their loved's blemishes up close.

"The answers may depend on the way you look at it," associate Prof. Yeo Da Ming, from the Nanyang Technological University wrote in Saturday's Straits Times newspaper.

"With kissing in action, this behavior seemingly overlooked," Yeo wrote in a question-and-answer column dubbed "The Listening Centre."

"Therefore closing the eyes is a natural way to reduce the sensory load," he wrote.

Three theories the science throws.

"When you kisses, blurred sort was three-dimensional images of the face of one's partner may be a taboo, and this feeling may be unpleasant," Yeo said. The answers could be to keep one's eyes damaged that. AP

WorldBriefs

Attack kills US soldier

BAGHDAD—A mortar attack on a US base in Baghdad killed an American soldier and wounded a coordinator working the Nothing Between A Word publishing. Sheikh Mahfouz said on Saturday. An Army statement said six mortars were fired at the base on Friday afternoon. There were no further details. Since the invasion to oust Saddam Hussein 16 days, at least 19 US soldiers have been killed in action in Iraq. Reuter

Japan to send troops to Iraq

TOKYO—Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's Cabinet on Friday approved guidelines allow Japanese troops to join a UN-sanctioned multinational force in Iraq. Japan, one of Washington's staunchest backers over the long war, has around 1400 troops in the southern Iraq city of Samawa providing post-war humanitarian assistance in the most controversial and dangerous mission since 1992. "Under the international force, the Self-defense Forces Japanese military could continue their activities," after the landmark of peace to troops on June 30. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuyoshi Records held a news conference after the Cabinet meeting. AFP

Pakistan kills tribal chief

Wana, Pakistan—Pakistan said Friday it had killed rebel tribal leader and former Taliban commander Nek Mohammad in a gunfight close near the Afghan border. It said 30 rebel in "greater success" in its offensive against its Saddle. Thousands of tribesmen gathered Friday morning to view Mohammad's body at his home village in Kalosoba, some 10 km from the rebel-occupied reform the Iraqi funeral fighter was killed in a clashes pro-state rebel line. Thursday. "This is definitely a big success in our ongoing operations," military spokesman Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan said. AFP

Afghan town falls to rebels

KABUL—In a fresh challenge to the interim government's US-backed government, a rebel commander seized a strategic provincial capital on Friday after clashes that killed several and forced the government to flee. In opposite attacks in the south and west of the country, an Afghan interpreter was killed and two US soldiers and two New Zealand special forces troops wounded, while the US refugee agency office was hit by rockets in the city of Qandahar. Workers are on the run—escaped security has worsened markedly in recent months as Islamic insurgents from the ousted Taliban militia want to disrupt elections due in September and insurgents accomplishes military targets sometimes and power without origin. Reuter

India-Pakistan nuclear talks

NEW DELHI—India and Pakistan on Saturday took off unprecedented talks to reduce the risk of nuclear war for the first time since the neighbors became nuclear powers in 1998 and have since after they adopted the bomb of war. The two days of talks in New Delhi come during a hardest, year-old peace process on the two nations, which have fought three wars. Pakistan's acting foreign secretary, Tariq Osmani Riaz, is leading an eight-member team for the discussions with an additional members from India's Foreign Ministry. Hindi Rana Sharma, and other officials. Reuter

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SHARP

Across the Nation
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Task force cops' answer to murder of radioman

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police authorities in Central Mindanao formed a task force to speed up the resolution of Thursday's murder of radioman Ely Bravo.

Chief Supt. Antonio Villasan, Central Mindanao police director, said SPO1 Ruben Donato Sugi, PSSg Dangpat Sarab and Sgt. Ishak Lubay have formed "I-35 p.m. on June 17.

He was on his way home after having his complaint against several persons, said to be supporters of Malungon Mayor Teodoro Baluyoda, notarized by the provincial prosecutor's office in Malungon town.

Copies of his complaint for physical injuries were found scattered near his body.

Police said the affidavit submitted by Bravo could be used as a clue to the possible motive in the investigation of his murder.

Dangpat said reporters on the police beat would assist all efforts to get Bravo's killers and give justice to the victim and his family. Bravo left behind six children.

Immediately after the murder, Dangpat ordered the Tinagacan police station to speed up the gathering of witnesses and pieces of evidence that could solve the murder and lead to the arrest of Bravo's killers.

The killer, authorities say, learned that his bomb concealed in a can of sardines.

Dangpat said if some people were hurt by Bravo's comments, they could have resorted to other means to get back at the commentator.

"There is a proper forum where one could retaliate for grievances if one feels slighted by the critical comments one hurled by any member of the media," Dangpat said.

Bravo is an addition to a growing list of journalists who had been killed in the country and whose murders have remained unsolved. —Agustin Pedro Iñiguez and Rodolfo Bulatan

MORE
A child lies on the cold floor of the Tagabid Elementary School in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat province, his family and their neighbors were driven by fear of getting caught in the crossfire as government troops and rebels clash in their village.

Briton nabbed for rape, pornography

ANGELES CITY—Police on Friday arrested a British national wanted in this city since August for rape and pornography charges.

Senior Supt. Jesus Version, Angeles City police chief, said the arrest of Barry Rowland Edwards by operatives of the city police's women and children concern section, led by Senior Insp. Cristina Bernardez, ended more than 10 months of search in various resort islands in the country.

Edwards, 58, was a native of Essex in the United Kingdom, who arrived in Barangay Subang in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, on Friday night.

Bernardez said the police pursued the buy after the city prosecutor's office recommended the filing complaints for rape against Edwards. The supposed victims of the British national were minors.

Dismissed

Assistant City Prosecutor Ruben Hilario dismissed three complaints in July last year due to lack of evidence.

But Bunyo said there was "overwhelming evidence" against Edwards.

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But Bunyo said there was "overwhelming evidence" against Edwards.

The preliminary investigation for the complaint involving pornography embossed in the Philippines through Article 201 of the Revised Penal Code, a felony to be presented soon following Edwards' arrest, police said.

The police, in the course operation for the latter girls in July last year, seized at least four videotapes and about 50 photographs of nude girls and women from Edwards' room at the Mahawlah Hotel here.

'Principal actor'

The tapes contained scenes of naked intercourse, with the British national acting the part of the "principal actor," Bunyo revealed.

Edwards said the research and his subsequent arrest and two-month detention at the police headquarters here were illegal.

Also on Friday night, police team detached here for a fourth Estonian who had acquired a Canadian citizenship. Sang is wanted for the rape of a 10-year-old girl on June 7. He is detained at the Angeles City jail. —Tonet de Orotea, PDI Circle of Liaison Desk

Find crocs first, DENR tells sanctuary planners

By Dionne Cúnas
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAUKO CITY—While the crocodiles first.

This was the message of environment officials to the Cordilleras to officials of Tinog, also, before the Department of Environment and Natural Resources declare the wilderness of the town as a crocodile sanctuary.

The Mount Data (MMD) Parks and Wildlife Division (DPWD) has been making observation forays in the river system of Tinog to document reports of sightings of crocodiles but the found have refused to convey photographs, saying.

"We had always been visiting the place where the crocodiles were said to have been sighted, but we could not choose upon them," Leo Vera, DWDE regional technical director, said in response to a forum here last week.

Tinog said those teams can only crocodile tracks. He said the presence reports of crocodile sightings in Tinog have prompted the DENR to declare the institution of a crocodile sanctuary there to protect and promote the reptile.

Large reptile

Crocodiles are found in the waters of all ocean regions in the world and are known to be the largest in the family of reptiles.

Crocodiles are common in the river systems of some parts of Mindanao and Palawan, Vera said. He said there were also unconfirmed crocodile sightings in Isabela.

Vera said a team of experts from the crocodile farm in Bataan has been helping the DENR in confirming the presence of crocodiles in Tinog. The team stayed for 20 days in the area but "mother data" this year but they only managed to find crocodile tracks.

Joel Reta, DENR division chief, said their observations in past indicated that the crocodiles are "just passing by in the swamps of Sitio Magsaysay and Balbalasang Tinog's Barangay Bow."

Reta said they found a nest and crocodile tracks in Sitio Magsaysay.

Sightings

The DENR has started receiving reports of crocodile sightings in Tinog since 1995, but the DENR declared a team of experts to confirm these claims to prevent rashal involvement of residents who claimed to have seen the reptile.

Reta said they even left a camera to a barangay official in the municipality to document the sightings.

Vera said pending the confirmation of the presence of crocodiles in Tinog, the DENR has asked local officials to refrain from trying to put up a wildlife sanctuary.

"If the place could not pass as a crocodile sanctuary, we would put up a wildlife sanctuary instead," Vera said.

Among the species being considered for inclusion in the sanctuary are Benedict rufous monkey and indigenous species of fish.

US Embassy blocks awarding of pioneer Igorots

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Some eleven dents of the Igorots who joined the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 is being exhibits await behind the event's centennial commemoration in Missouri after they failed to receive entry visas to the United States.

The Igorot Global Organization said the International Igorot problems, were iconic members, say that their ancestors were the first wave of Igorots to work abroad.

The descendants would have received honorary distinctions from the 18th International Igorot Congress on July 4, on behalf of 70 Ramon Igorots (Mr. Pensionado) and 16 Igorots (Igorot Bontoguan) and 16 Bagobos (Moro), who were featured in the fair in "Igorot Village."

The 1904 exposition's desire can organizers recruited up to 1,000 Filipinos, including Moro and Bontoguan, who were shipped in the fair as examples of the American's years rule in world colonialism, according to historian Ferdinan Maldis, an ancestor of the fourth-century horticulturist.

Most of the Igorots in the exposition were asked to perform menial tasks, which included the butchering of dogs and chickens.

Philkan Bugnay, IGO vice chair for the Philippines, said Bill Bontoguan, IGO president who is based in the United States, met US assistance to Rt. Pacman, leader of the rebel-exhibit or the Igorots of the fair.

The IGO contacted relatives who were willing to accommodate delegates for the descendants' 10 trip, Bugnay said.

Despite the assistance provided by Ursula Danny, a Bontoguan-based School official and an IGO convener, none of the direct descendants was cleared by the US Embassy, Bugnay said.

Bunny said she was not informed about the reasons for the descendants' rejection of their visa applications.

Bugnay said the IGO would now ask US-based grandchildren and great-grandchildren to accept the awards on behalf of their ancestors.

"It would have been (more significant) if the ceremony allowed them to join the Igorot congress, knowing their parents' and grandparents' history in the US," Bugnay said.

Maldis said many of the awards, like 10-year-old Antaya, perhaps one of the most distressed Igorots who was on display in 1906, were young men and women who saw the fair as an opportunity to earn.

The awarded descendants of the ancestors through their families in the US. We heard about the death of some of the last remaining survivors in Canada," Bugnay said.

Filipino slain in Iraq wanted 'the best' for family

By Peter Lu Jalbuena
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAN FERNANDO CITY—He was proud and envious in his profession and he always aimed to excel.

In fact, he impressed his superiors at the US-based General Electric Co., in Iraq that they promoted him as supervisor of the electric power plant that GE was constructing at the outskirts of Baghdad.

This is how Antonio Flores, a retired La Union provincial treasurer, described his son Raul Cardinal Gabriel, 29, who was killed Monday in a suicide car bombing in Baghdad.

Police said two companions died through cell phones. It was his son who called him to tell him about his promotion with a higher salary barely three days after working in Iraq.

Flores told the Inquirer that the pioneer Iraq's Top Issues" included two fathers, a friend and an associate.

They died with Raul during the attack when they were caught in traffic and were returning from the job site, a 40-minute drive from Baghdad.

There were another Filipino who, like Raul, was hired by GE in Iraq but he was left of their quintet as a US military installation in Baghdad, according to Antonio.

"It is hard to lose a good son, who wanted his family to have the best in their life," the grieving father said.

"I know Iraq was a risky place, but it was my son's decision to go there," Antonio, who heads and was killed by unidentified gunmen, but nothing was happening unless inside or outside the house, he said.

Raul, a civil engineer and a holder of a doctoral degree in public administration, was on a six-month leave at the Ateneo de Manila University. He applied at the GE branch in Manila and was hired on consultant.

At contractor, Raul worked for a power plant in Singapore for three years. But he returned to the country in 2003 when the Secretary Angelo Reyes-led by-talions threatened Southeast Asia.

"On the day he was killed, it was his 21st day in Iraq," Antonio said, adding that Raul was also a diagnosis who participated in drug shows. Raul left the country May 26.

Antonio said on the day he was

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Election as price war

DUGONG MINDANAW

We want to know what the Mindanaoan youngblood, middle-aged blood or high blood are thinking about what's happening in Mindanao and the rest of the country.—Ed.

By Bunsoi M. Cribo

THE RECENT elections, from where I sat, could only be viewed as a money contest, a price war. Just before you can say, let me explain.

Since money is now believed by politicians to be the single most effective way of winning votes, it has become synonymous with election itself.

In Dumpao del Sur, we call election money *tilli-tilli* or rain shower; but that would have to change because on May 10, it proved to be much more than just a trickle. In fact, it made people pay their electric bills that fell due a day after elections, making the generic electric cooperative had achieved its highest collection rate in three years.

It also must have answered the evil phrase used much of my nephew because he hasn't asked me for pocketmoney for over a week now. A beloved miser-aunt, he stayed home on election eve, not wanting to miss the vote-buyer going from door to door to distribute bills crisp enough to choke one's mustache with, stapled to a piece of paper that had their names computer-printed in bold Font.

It is of interest that the traditional vote-buying method has been supplanted by a scheme that has voters brandishing politicians or their proxies. Time was when politicians barricaded the electorate either by having their white canvas arrays on their bodices or sign papers upon receipt of 'tili-tili. Now, voters will have votes of choice, and instead they rarely decline that if a deal has to be struck, it has to be under their terms. So, after all, there are other politicians out there who are too willing to accommodate their wishes.

The voter backed this through a homemade sample ballot that he handed and pedaled to candidates who were willing to pay for their inclusion, marking an 'Ismo check-'Yun-paid, 'Ayo-wanid' policy, and his awarding the final deal to the highest bidder.

I was told by Dog the runner never stopped negotiating because even if he had filled up his slate, there were ballot-stealing candidates who offered to buy out and have their stakers report instead on the occasion of the counting committees. The cyclic element of this painter had the voter counting the heads with a sample ballot that had more layers than a cabbage.

Many cite on "planting time," a euphemism for indiscriminate vote-buying where politicians, like farmers, cast monetary seeds, unbothered by the thought of whether they grow or not. Banking on voters' convenience, this strategy, while effective, is a bumper crop for the electorate, to whom bank politicians to experience fiscal ill-fides afterwards.

A friend, whose father ran for councilor, said he "planted two" worth 20,000 bucks but reaped only 4,000. Whew, that's a 5-percent mortality rate! If P20 per, that's like drowning P100,000 in the wind.

Some candidates distributed a mishmash of rice, noodles, coffee, milk, sugar, candies, toothbrush, lighter, bath soaps and detergents. Another friend told me that it took her almost a week to pack and open these days to have her goodies delivered in the voters' homes. With half of a loan's smile on her face, she added that cash would have been easier, cheaper and more discreet.

Surprisingly, some voters may have been grudged by their conscience after accepting tili-tili from all sides because there were Indians that consumed 15 meters of a supposedly eight-meters canvas. Either, that or they were just scrupulously fair. It could also be that they simply wanted to try public service career over dessert spiced by the dues.

Ahhh, but I have those voters who added humor to their bellies by making them read like a grocery list. To illustrate, using fictitious names, imagine you're inside a packed classroom where votes are being canvassed. The teacher opens a ballot and goes, "Bluse-Marisol Blumera, P400; Tire Mayor: Boni Disca, P100; Brgy. Captain: Renan Rhoda, P50; Brgy. Mr. Clean: Bobbi, Mayale Noodle Soup, Tanada, 20; Laser, Rear Brand, Asbestos, 25; Upaz, Sky Flakes Lotion, KFA mas."

By the time the teacher is done, you're teary-eyed and, like me, you don't know whether there was much laughing or from the biting reality of how the right of suffrage has come the way of the most obtuse.

My province reportedly showed a decline of at least 10 percent in the number of candidates this year over that in 2001. This could be due to attrition that running a campaign in Dumpao del Sur spells financial bloodbath, thus slowly ruining our political gladiators from any penny whose ruins are distributed solely by the rules of money.

After the full accomplishment of the ballot in the May 10 polls, there's no second guessing what the political landscape would be from hereon. But, early, somebody has told me that if the trend continues, we might be paying people to run in 2010.

Ooh, lok, lok! That means I can't laugh out loud like I did the day after elections when my favorite canvass store gave me a change that included an orange bill still stapled to the portrait of the candidate who swore he won by the sheer strength of his vocal chord and not appeal.

E-MAIL the author at <cribo@yahoo.com>

Alternative law, anyone?

By Ria Gudmo Ortega
Correspondent Intern

THERE is no money in alternative lawyering.

Besides, what respectable lawyer would trade his burning tagalog and private cars for a backpack and a ballad-hailed ride to his flying plates just to go to work? It's hardly the ideal picture of a lawyer people have in mind.

But for alternative lawyers in Mindanao, money and glamor are not everything.

"In this unique breed of lawyers, saving the environment and empowering the disadvantaged are more important—and calamine—than wedding lucid to win the hearts and minds of law students.

Lying just under the shadow of all the writers' workshops that blossom in the country during summer is the Davao-based Alternative Law Groups' Summer Internship Program (ALGISP) for law students.

Held from April to May, the ALGISP helps law students choose the right career paths for them to take on lawyers in the future and provide them opportunities to bond and have a great time.

Lawyer Nicholas Bacalla of the Cagayan de Oro-based Balay Alternative Legal Advocates for Development in Mindanao (Balay-Mindanao) said the internship program introduces law students to alternative lawyering.

Balay-Mindanao, the Legal Rights Center (LRC) and the Paguidan City-based Environmental Legal Assistance Center (Elac-Mindanao) held the ALGISP for the Northern Mindanao cluster for 24 interns from seven law schools.

Seventeen of this year's interns came from the Xhildonian State University's College of Law in Bugan City; Liceo de Cagayan University in Cagayan de Oro City and Osias College in Dumaran City.

Four interns from the San Carlos University and San Juan Bosco, also in Cebu City, San Agustin University in Iloilo City and La Salle Bacolod joined the Northern Mindanao cluster.

The program opened the eyes of participants to women issues, the plight of the poor, the indigenous peoples and the environment. It showed them a different side to lawyering—one that is not so high profile but noble nonetheless.

Uni interns Eric Tolja, a law student from Uitos College, described his immersion with the Higaon-onons in the Talaandanan of Nauwan, Misamis Oriental: "Out there you are forced to learn the law since that is what you are to help the people."

Tolja also said that there was no other place in the country where he felt the need for social justice more acutely than in the charming hills overlooking the beautiful Macajalar Bay.

"I am aware of the injustices committed against indigenous peoples and the poor but it is only different when one ... sees it face to face," said the 29-year-old former bank officer.

Inland-Mindanao intern Audrey Abenayan of Liceo de Cagayan University shares Tolja's sentiments saying what she saw in her immersion in a Negros Oriental town opened her eyes to the ever widening chasm between the landed rich and the dirt-poor peasants.

The 23-year-old Abenayan said she was moved by the poverty of peasants who until now are still fighting for their benefits under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

It was while Abenayan was helping document cases of abuses there that she heard her "calling."

"The experience has shown me that I can be in a position to help these people, and when I become a lawyer in the future I want to still help them."

Another intern who also heard his "calling" is MSU College of Law student Margarita Pacher who entered law school because it was the "most economically profitable."

"Now, I don't even think of the money," earns the 23-year-old Illan-Mindanao intern who was detained in Iligan—but tried during the internship—that even judges were ignorant of indigenous laws, "especially the new laws." But no matter the personality-fulfilling and heart-warming perks of alternative lawyering, its reputation as a cash-strapped profession still remains a stumbling block for most law students.

Alternative law groups are trying to address this by establishing links with law schools in Northern Mindanao.

Lawyer Jennifer Hamoc, Illan-Mindanao intern manager and a former law student herself at the Ateneo Human Rights Center in 1999, said the internship program is their way of finding new bloodline for their law.

"Lawyers have to find their mission in life. This is ours," she said.

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METRO
Editor Antonio S. Menday

Prime QC properties face auction

SOLITUDE
A man on a bicycle, a lone stretch of empty road, and drizzle make for a quiet, refreshing afternoon on campus at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. JOEY GOSIENGFIAO

By Tina Santos

UNTIL payments are on the way, the Quezon City government has no choice but to auction off 30 real estate properties of delinquent taxpayers who failed to pay billions of pesos in overdue taxes despite repeated demands, it said.

Among those to be auctioned off are government-owned as well as private and commercial properties, with the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) ranking the highest in terms of tax arrears. The transport agency owes the city government P2.1 billion.

According to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, the MRT had not settled their financial obligations to the city "since day 1 of their operations in 1999."

As far as owners of private properties are concerned, only those who have back taxes for five years and beyond are included in the auction, he added.

Back taxes due

The mayor would not give the exact amounts of the city's collectibles since they have yet to conduct a tax analysis that would segregate late debts of government-owned corporations apart from pieces of real property of private individuals to determine the efficiency of the city's tax-collection efforts.

Other pieces of property on the auctioned off are the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System, with tax arrears of P93.8 million; the Lung Center of the Philippines, which owes the city government P48 million; Fisher Center of the Philippines, with back taxes of P20 million; and the National Kidney Transplant Institute with tax arrears of P12.8 million.

Aggressive drive

Belmonte said the city government and the hospitals had earlier forged an agreement for the assessment of the agencies' real property tax arrears and penalties into health services for the benefit of the constituents, especially the poor.

City Treasurer Victor Endaya reported that as of June 15, the city government has collected a total of P4.2 billion in revenues. A stringent Bank-centered management and aggressive tax collection campaign had been implemented, resulting in increased tax collections.

Belmonte said the city administration's main goal is not just to auction off property of delinquent taxpayers but more importantly, to remind and warn them of their tax obligations.

Meralco flyover nails motorists in Ortigas

By Luige del Puerto

AVOID Meralco Avenue in Pasig City and avoid a headache.

The multithousand-liter oil drum scuff-free ruin across Ortigas Extension has been closed to traffic due to the ongoing construction of its flyover at Doña Julia Vargas Avenue.

Motorists coming from Shaw Boulevard going to Ortigas Avenue are directed to make a right at St. Paul Street, just after the Department of Education complex, then left to Meralco Street to get to Julia Vargas Avenue.

Ortigas maneuver

From there, they would turn right to go toward C-5 Road or maneuver to go to the Ortigas Center.

Last week, traffic in the area was heavy, with some drivers deciding it is "unbearable."

Motorists were forced to crawl along a 300-m. stretch from St. Paul's Road to Julia Vargas for 30 minutes, at least, on average.

"If you could avoid Meralco because, avoid it," said Jr. Insp. Reynaldo Lumbacan, head of Pasig City's traffic police.

"If you are coming from Shaw Boulevard, take that Miguel Avenue. And if you are coming from Ortigas Avenue, take Dayo Street," he said.

The rerouting could last up to July 28, he said.

JCK van drivers are complaining. What used to be a relatively 15-minute ride from Barangay Ugong to the Ortigas Center can now stretch up to 45 minutes.

Illegal counterflow

What makes the congestion worse is motorists making an illegal counterflow on the southbound lane. This takes up a third lane and clashes the flow of vehicles from the opposite direction.

Once a counterflow has been started, traffic enforcers find it difficult to stop and ask the drivers to comply, adjust to the situation.

The traffic build-up usually starts at about 4 p.m. on weekdays, and lasts anywhere between three to four hours.

Pasig traffic police officials are adding motorcops for a little more manpower.

"A major artery has been closed. That is the problem. The best thing that could be done is to simply avoid Meralco Avenue," the traffic chief said.

Aussie trial awaits Filipino

By Leila B. Salaverria

A FILIPINO wanted for murder in Australia is scheduled for extradition on Monday to face trial for the killing of a Saigon native in 2002.

Set to fly to New South Wales on Monday night is 40-year-old Alejandro Alinsod who, together, a resident of Calamundan City and a former worker in an Australian phone factory.

Alinsod surrendered to the National Bureau of Investigation last month to submit himself for extradition on the condition that he would prove his innocence, according to NBI Investigation Director Armando Fil.

Grisly murder

He is one of two Filipinos suspected of killing a fellow worker, Tangkeanian Pehwatanin Smith, who was found dead in his house in Bayside Hill, Sydney, on Dec. 15, 2002. His body was hidden for a day before it was cut into pieces and taken to a nearby hill.

The other suspect, identified as Professor Keith Vesco, was caught in Australia in April last year, said Interpol executive officer Jun delCastro.

Shortly after the killing, Alinsod returned to the Philippines.

Miranda said the suspect told investigators that he was just a witness to the crime.

Alinsod had initially gone into hiding after learning the NBI was after him, but he was subsequently persuaded to turn himself in.

Coast Guard nabs 2 Indians

By Leila B. Salaverria

TWO INDIAN nationals with invalid travel documents were caught by Philippine Coast Guard operatives on Friday shortly after their ship docked at Manila's South Harbor from Luzhnongo.

Two of their countrymen who were supposed to be with them were also taken into custody.

Ravinderjeet Singh, 28, and Gill Kulwal Jeet Singh, 30, were nabbed after slipping from the MV Luzhnongo Prosecutor. Their passports, found hidden in their shoes, indicated prior travel to Thailand.

The two others were identified as Jagtinder Singh and Jhanny Amrit Singh.

Apart from facing complaints for illegal entry, the pair would also be investigated in case they are involved in human smuggling, said PCG National Capital Region Central Luzon chief Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo.

The four were turned over to the Bureau of Immigration.

According to a PCG report, six months back the PCG, the armed forces and the police on board the MV Luzhnongo Prisoner had encountered something was wrong because Singh's brother and Gill had "smuggled" [illegible]

Not to worry, malls are safe

By Luige del Puerto

CEO DET and shop. The malls are safe.

Police gave this advice to worried Metro Manila residents following the spate of explosions in Quezon City and Makati that left four people injured recently.

"The malls, theaters and other commercial centers are safe," said Chief Supt. Oscar Valientes, head of the Eastern Police District. "The attacks were even meant to harass but to scare people."

But the police urged malls goers to be cautious, adding any sign of suspicious activity must be immediately reported to authorities.

The EPD has jurisdiction over three of the metropolis' biggest shopping centers—SM Megamall, SM Mall, Shangri-La, Robinsons Galleria had been recently added to the EPD's watch list.

Valientes said police are still trying to determine the identity of the attackers. The attacks had come in the wake of clear canvassing in Congress over calls of some politicians to be supporters of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Scores of policemen and soldiers have been deployed to guard the Edsa Shrine as vigil and prayer services led by Poe supporters continue in Edsa Ave. and Mandaluyong supporters.

In a related development, police officials and business leaders met at the Bahay ni Dawin Mandaluyong City the other day to work out "doable" security measures.

The group, called the Metro East Coordinating Council, wants to make Ortigas Center the "safest commercial and residential zone in Metro Manila."

Mayor Ernesto Rodriguez city consultant at Ortigas said among the things agreed upon was direct security guards to monitor areas beyond their immediate peripheries.

"It's simply watching over your neighbor's condominium," he added.

The police said this system could be a model for other Metro Manila establishments.

By their direct number, guardians can coordinate police in their multiplexes, and are directed to swear where the police have little or no presence.

SPECIALS TV

BOXING. 2004 IBF Cares Title Bout: Lapid vs. Ramos, 1 p.m. (PPV) 9 p.m. (r) Solar Sports.

BOWLING. 2004 PBA Open Championship, 1 p.m. (r) ABS-CBN—Zest Bowling & Recreation vs Alaska (for second spot in Finals).

MOTOR SPORTS. 2004 F1 GP Grand Prix Qualifying, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. (r) Solar Sports—Formula 1 Heroes qualifying session in Indianapolis.

TV schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Editor Rodolfo S. Palaypayon

COACH Boy Bawal (with glasses) celebrates with the Nikon Force after Viva-FEU captured the PBL 2nd Unity Cup championship yesterday with a final 3-1 score over Philippine Police in their best-of-five series.

Viva-FEU breaks through

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PENALLO, Viva Mineral Water-FEU walked the one that slipped away.

Fifth-seeded midgame Nikon Force proved for the sixth consecutive collapse by escaping Philippine Police, 30-25, yesterday to capture the PBL 2nd Unity Cup title at the Ynares Sports Center.

It was Viva-FEU's first championship since joining the league last year in the same conference where it lost the title to Hapee Toothpaste after taking a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five championship series.

The Vitalmore and Cobra-led Nikon Force (formerly of the now-suspended Ynares Sports Center after PBL management decided that it was too risky to have clubs keeping the first dibs on the arena after the Nikon Force opened a similar 2-1 margin in the playoffs.

But experience did not help after the Nikon assembled an improved Ground Game worked into the series-clinching five-game.

"It was all a blessing in one day," said Bawal, whose charges survived through the disappointment and uncertainties with an 11-1 record. "We were really destined to win this title after what happened earlier [our three conferences]."

Bawal, who attributed his possible game-winning shot to Coach Ed Juat, said, "The [confidence] that we felt for your willingness to appreciate his efforts when times [were] tough." He scored four points and four rebounds yesterday.

Vitalmore, which grabbed 27 rebounds in its triumph against Nikon, 25, briefly threatened to extend the series by taking an eight-point lead, 41-33, midway in the third quarter when Nikon gamely dared not allow the blowout.

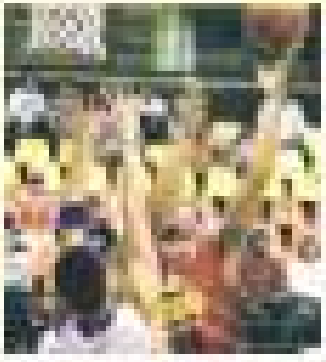
But the Nikon Force ended their scoring drought with eight unanswered points for a 45-41 deficit entering the fourth quarter.

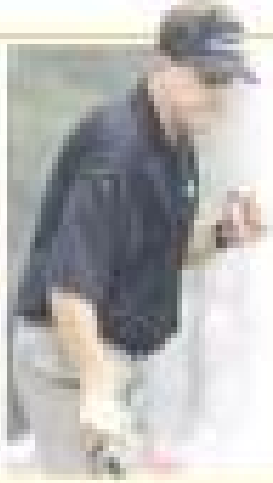
As I said before, we will [go as] long as [we] have fuel," said Bawal. "[And] as long as we try our best [we can win]."

In scores:

THIRD PLACE—[illegible]

MEDAL—Sagay 15, Magana 7 (p.t. Sagay 4, Rivera 3, Ramos 2, Amaya 1, Valenzuela 1, Bay 1, Ramos 1, Guevara)





What's Inside

UEFA 2004 game schedules on Dream

June 21, 2:45 a.m.
Spain
vs.
Portugal
June 21, 12:00 p.m.
(Denver Broncos)
Russia
vs.
Greece

CATCH THE GAMES LIVE ON DREAM SATELLITE CHANNEL 18
AND ON DREAM CABLE CHANNEL 3

INQUIRER Vol. LVIII, No. 303

OPINION

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Rhyme and reason

THE SUPREME COURT has declared as illegal a decision of the Energy Regulatory Commission granting the Manila Electric Co. provisional authority to increase its rates by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour beginning January this year. While acknowledging the ERC's authority to grant rate increases, the Court said that the ERC abused such power first by ignoring the motion of those who opposed Meralco's application for a rate increase and then not considering the "serious objections" they raised.

EDITORIAL

The ruling in effect requires that any increase in electricity rates should be done with transparency and follow due process. This is most welcome, especially considering the not-so-pleasant developments consumers have to put up with in the last few days.

Last June 11, the government announced that it would assume the P600-billion debt liability of the National Power Corp. Three days earlier, Napocor was allowed by the ERC to charge its customers—the power distribution utilities in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, including Meralco—P2.25 per kWh, an increase of 14 centavos per kWh. A day before that, the same ERC had given Meralco the go-signal to increase its electricity rates by 13.7 centavos per kWh starting next month.

In these decisions we see the manifestations of an industry controlled by Big Business and influential families, spinning out of control, if not going on a rampage, apparently driven by its own narrow interests. These decisions will put more pressure on the finances of the consumers, which is already weighed down by a national debt amounting to P4.36 trillion and a budget deficit that is expected to reach close to P300 billion. In more specific terms, the decisions will make a bigger hole in the pockets of ordinary Filipinos who are already reeling from the series of increases in the prices of oil and basic commodities as well as public transportation fares, even as their wages and salaries have remained static for more time now.

These decisions are not just reactionary, they are also difficult to understand. In 1994, Meralco entered into a Contract for the Sale of Electricity (CSE) guaranteeing the purchase of 4,000 megawatts of electricity from the state-owned power generation company for a period of 10 years at P1.64 per kWh. But in December 2001, Meralco walked away from the agreement, and Napocor was stuck with unutilized capacity. To cover the supply shortfall, Meralco started buying from independent power producers (IPPs)—at prices higher than Napocor's. It may not be purely coincidence that one of the IPPs from which Meralco is buying power is also partly owned by Meralco. Now Meralco is reportedly paying some of these IPPs P4.21 per kWh.

Needless to say, the cost of Napocor's "stranded" power and the "extra charge" arising from Meralco's IPP contracts are being passed on to the poor consumers. This means consumers pay twice for every kilowatt-hour of electricity provided by the more expensive suppliers (IPPs).

In another surprising move, Meralco and Napocor filed last April 15 with the ERC a joint petition seeking approval of their settlement agreement. Under the agreement, Meralco will pay Napocor P27.515 billion in penalties for violating the terms of the 1994 CSE. However, Napocor will compensate Meralco to the tune of P7.47 billion for its failure to provide transmission services to Meralco's IPPs and for the cost of energy sold directly by Napocor to consumers inside the Meralco franchise area. This would cut Meralco's liability to P20.05 billion.

Critics say that if the agreement is approved by the ERC, Meralco will simply pass on this P20.05 billion liability to its consumers over a period of five to six years through a 13 centavos per kilowatt-hour charge on top of the increase that the ERC granted a few days ago. Thus, the consumers will not only be paying Napocor for unused power but also be burdened with the higher cost of electricity from Meralco's IPPs.

The recent Supreme Court decision should serve as fair warning to the government as well as to Napocor, Meralco, the IPPs and other power companies. What the decision says is that they must remember to put rhyme and reason to anything they do, especially when it affects the consumers.

Reasons for hope

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

DESPITE the traditional blemishes of the last elections, there had at least two significant results that suggest that Philippine democracy is not that sick last. They are the silver lining behind the clouds that may yet brighten the future of this benighted country.

The first of these effects is the unmistakable decline of the influence of the conveniences on the electorate. The second is the expected breaking up of the political dynasties that have gripped many fiefdoms for decades.

Inconvenients are such have their entrepreneur and that is to entertain. When they imitate from the purpose and seek higher stakes, they become dangerous to their protectors-clients. Ano-nuevo, Ano-viejo, these inconvenients the entrepreneur to discharge public office. The results, however, is that they enjoy the support of the unthinking voters who believe that their letters can do in real life what they perform on film. The result, in many cases, a prejudice to the public welfare.

The best example of such alternation is Joseph Estrada. He reached the highest office in the land (what he discharged with a minimum of qualifications and a maximum of incompetence and, the government changes, or Gabriel ary as well. On the local level is Jose Marcos, who was three terms as mayor of Batangas City and converted it into the Bilibid town in Metro Manila while serving part time as a co-anchor on TV. He also has found to resign and Manpower was elected to be congressman.

Fernando Poe Jr. is unique in that one has been found, but the electorate said no, having learned to lament. Other candidates from the entertainment world who had enabled on their stunt attractive—and no more—suffered the same rejection. Melencio of Cabiscon, Pintong of Mandaluyong, and Gordon of Manila, together with Pilar Pilapil and Dolphy (he also, were told to go back to acting, too. Vicente Sotto III may soon join his former colleagues, too. Senate is no place for amateurs.

The only Star is that some of the entertainers are just plain idiots with the same worn emotions. Vicente Sotto Boing Revilla is still acting his silly role in "Ismol sa Kagat" and can now run. It wonder what this vulgar clown will be doing in the future. Same here with Lito Lapid, who will probably go to his new office or home-back. As for Jinggoy Estrada, it was such a tragedy that he landed in 13th place while Rodolfo Biazon and Robert Barbers fared so better in the last levels. Both of them are equally qualified compared to the threadbare Jinggoy.

The Constitution provides that "the State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law." Naturally, this has not been implemented by Congress, where political dynasties abound. It was native of the Constitutional Commission to believe that the legislators would have the interests to pass a law that would cut off the source of their political power and allow outsiders to intrude into their realm.

President Sergio Osmeña III may have started it all when he placed Cebu under his political control early during the American regime. He was succeeded by Sergio Osmeña, Sr.-nior, who also served as President, after serving as governor of Cebu, member of the house of representatives and senator. Lito Osmeña, remember, was once a governor of the province. Now Sergio ended his political career with his defeat in the presidential election of 1949. But his dynasty endured.

Other dynasties have followed, the Villafuertes in Camarines Sur, the Espino-Cojuangcos in Central Luzon, the Ortegas in La Union, the Yaps in Batanes, the Jaworski in Puerto Princesa, the Gordons in Olongapo City, the Aquinos in Tarlac City and the Pilatos in Agusan. And there are also the rare exceptions like the Reyeses in Makati City, the Atienzas in Muntinlupa City, the Asistenas in Manila, and the Rodrigos in San Juan, among many others.

Most of these dynasties have continued their hold on the electorate, but a few are wearing away with the passage of decades. The drawbridge has been crossed, the corners are under attack. It may take some time before the enemy succumbs, but inroads cannot mean forever the mounting public dissatisfaction with one family lording it over the province or city with the "divine right" of total ascendancy.

Thus, in Cebu, the Garcia family, which may start its own dynasty, has defeated gubernatorial candidate Tito Sen. John Gregory Osmeña. Sen. John Osmeña, former OIC mayor of Cebu City, congressman and now governor, has frustrated for re-election. His cousin, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, is on his second term in the Senate, and Tomas Osmeña may aim again to mayor of Cebu City, but then should remember that many political time is numbered.

The most encouraging sign of the decline of the political dynasty's role in society is as applied symbolism over the inconvenient by family in Manila. The Ople have been in power in that province for the past 32 years and were probably shocked to learn that a woman had finally turned them. Now the defeated Ople is chalking her vote on the ground that she is a woman. But I am a ridiculous charge: will the election monarchs can make her, she, your dynasty is crumbling like a castle in the sand.

Self-denial and sacrifice

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

TUE IS DAY is said to be a father and a mother who wanted to surprise their only daughter with a brand-new car on her graduation day. When she woke up the next morning, she saw in their garage a beautiful red car. On the windshield of the car was a card with this message, "With all our love, Mama and Papa."

* * *

The Gospel today (Lk. 9, 18-24) speaks about denying oneself and taking up one's cross daily and following Him. Today, which is father's day, we remember and honor our parents who have sacrificed so much for us. In particular, we honor the fathers who have worked hard and had to forego a lot of things for the sake of the family. One of the best definitions of a father is the one that says, "A father is one who wears out a pair of shoes while the rest of the family wears out a set of tires." If only parents would follow today's Gospel of self-denial and sacrifice, there would be more happy homes and less delinquent children.

* * *

There's a lot of talk these days about self-fulfillment and self-preservation. A person can spend a whole lifetime doing just that, and still end up empty, vain and unhappy. There's no greater tragedy than a self-fulfilling life or losing oneself for others. It is the giver, not the takers of this world who know and experience what life is all about. Takers end up with a lot in their hands but empty in their hearts, while givers may end up with empty hands, but full and overflowing hearts.

* * *

My father was a giver. He did not give us much materially, but he gave us love. He gave us time. Above all, he gave us good example and a good name. He gave a lot to other people. He was generous to a fault. He even gave his life prior to a poor relative so much so that three days before his burial on June 27, 1987, we still did not know where to lay him to rest. That is the way how my father lived. That is the way he died. He was the true epitome, the real sacrifice, the way of self-denial. It is a way many of us avoid. But that is the only way to a truly happy and meaningful life now, and hereafter.

* * *

Someone sentenced me finally we have someone to look up to in Congress in the person of Congressman Walter Bloj. Manuel "Nonoy" Zamora. This congressman literally has no fear about doing humble and lowly jobs for his country. He carrying bullet boxes, doing the garden and even acting as a waiter for his fellow representatives. He goes to Congress on a motorcycle bike, wears simple clothes, and—listen to this—finally will make his first trip abroad, expenses paid for by the people who invited him to give a talk to Fil-Ams in California. He doesn't talk much. He is about the only guy in Congress who is not concerned about self-aggrandizement. While many of his colleagues are busy fattening bills and all sorts of schemes, this simple guy is simply trying to be true to his constituents and to his beloved Philippines. Mabuhay ka "Bing-bong"! May our land have more self-effacing, humble, diligent and self-sacrificing government officials like you!

* * *

Recently, this newspaper took notice of a Catholic priest who was robbed and killed in Norzagaray. Fr. Romeo Arnaldez died at the age of 57. He loved a simple, contemplative life. Unlike other priests, he did his own housekeeping, cleaned his own bedroom and had planned to paint the church roof before he died. In fact, he was on his bicycle, his means of transportation, on the day he was killed up. It is so inspiring to know that there are priests like Father Arnaldez who live humbly, fulfilled the highest value of hard work, sacrifice and self-denial. Mabuhay ka, Father Romeo. May we have more simple, humble and self-effacing fathers of the Church like you!

* * *

The common denominator of these inspiring fathers I've mentioned above is their self-denial and sacrifice. They are simple fathers who believe in righteousness, hard work and sacrifice. People may find them strange or even stupid, but they go on with their "stupid" ways anyway. They are the ones who walk against the crowd, the ones who march and bring food, guidance and bring good are what money does. Most "rich" people end up being poor, tangled or, or even dead, but no what? Actually is there any only two choices in this life: Either you self others or yourself destroy.

* * *

Let me end with yet another story of a father who had a daughter with two names. One was average, while the other was incongruous. What was he to do? He insisted on three for his child. Of course! What father wouldn't want just that? He happened to consult a wise and experienced man, and in the conclusion that it was best for his child to marry the one who was average, for in his mind, that was the "lesser evil," and that would be in the best interest of the child, though he was not sure whom his child would marry. Question: If you were the father of the child, what would you have done? Would you have taken time to really find out whom your daughter preferred, or would you have, in the name of expediency, chosen what you thought was best for her? Hypothesize or touch?

* * *

A comment with the Lord:
Lord, teach me self-denial, hard work and sacrifice. Amen.

Teamwork and resiliency

REVELLE

Ramon J. Farolan

IN 1987, one of the biggest upsets in professional basketball history, an underrated Detroit Pistons captained their rival NBA title in 10 years by defeating the heavily favored Los Angeles Lakers. Not content to rest, Pat Riley kept our favorite franchise has been terrorizing NBA's perennial champions by winning three of the next five years.

The Los Angeles Lakers with its all-star cast of players that included Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal, and considered to be years by Phil Jackson and Tex Winter, is the latest in the NBA dynasty. Only three other teams in the history of professional basketball have been able to play for the Lakers...were considered Atlanta in the Western Conference title with only a defending champion San Antonio standing in the way. The Lakers' winning three games on roster impossible to do. Derek Fisher is the last second of Game 3, the Lakers won when neither San Antonio to score into the final, against the Minnesota Timberwolves, Minnesota was no match for Los Angeles and in the NBA finals would dispatch with LA guard sensation Jalen Rose. Indiana's Reggie Miller, the greatest clutch shooter of his generation, the Detroit Pistons.

As the point of the world, not many can master of the Pistons. As one newspaper put it, they are "a team of destiny." Indeed, they are. The Pistons were not expected to win more than the Pistons were favored to win a variety of ordinary players—without a single star or Hall of Famer in their lineup—Pistons plays better than the sum of its parts. Coach Larry Brown's system, the glamour and glitz of Los Angeles with no success and no known talented personalities.

The Lakers were looking forward to their fourth championship in five years while their coach Phil Jackson had his eyes on the record of 10 NBA titles. He had to contend to be Chicago Bulls and three with the Lakers, and was counting on the Pistons to be the next victim. But Jackson's team is not the only one that is looking for a three-peat, and recently had different clubs: One of Dave Chappell's failings, who has signed three Atlantic Rhythm Section of the 80's bands, had played in four different teams in three seasons with the Atlanta Hawks, the Chicago Bulls and the Portland Trail Blazers. Indeed, to succeed, to succeed one of places in the NBA. But he was able to muscle Jordan and limit his production while scoring in double-digit figures himself. Coach Rudy Tomjanovich never won an NBA championship although in college he led Houston Cougars to the NCAA title.

There are some lessons which can be drawn from the manner in which Detroit carved out a magnificent victory in the face of great odds.

First, the importance of teamwork. We don't need high-priced superstars to accomplish our objectives. What is necessary is that the players do their best in carrying out their respective roles such as defense and offense. Often we rely too much on one or two outstanding players and when they are out of shape or are less than their usual, there is no one who can move up to take over their roles. The same is true in professional life. Just like in contrast Ivy League graduates or graduates of the Philippine Military Academy. They deplorable both great, but having been reared in a different environment, they may be completely out of sync with the local culture or system and, subsequently, end up being poor role models.

Second, never take your opponent for granted. The Lakers were favored to advance to the finals. Everyone, including the writer, thought that they were going to have an easy romp to the finals. Indeed, they were complacent in every respect as the Pistons management's arrogance and overconfidence all combined to lull the Lakers into a dangerous sense of supremacy. Magic Johnson, a past owner of the Lakers, described a loss as "a number that was disrespectful of the Lakers." To the end, they paid a heavy price for their hubris.

Third, the virtue of resilience in the Western Conference semifinals, the San Antonio Spurs were leading the Lakers in Game 6 with less than half a second left in the ballgame, as mentioned earlier, in the remaining time. Father of the Lakers joined the winning flurry that broke the game's the Spurs. They came to crowd and went on to win the whole series. In contrast, the Pistons in Game 2 of the NBA finals were leading the Lakers by three points with 10 seconds left, when Robert Horry's 3-pointer that gave the Lakers the lead. Detroit could have easily folded but it didn't. Instead, it won the game by overcoming the Lakers in the last 10 seconds of regulation and in overtime.

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. It is the ability to overcome the odds and to succeed despite the odds. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. It is the ability to overcome the odds and to succeed despite the odds. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. It is the ability to overcome the odds and to succeed despite the odds.

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. It is the ability to overcome the odds and to succeed despite the odds. Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from adversity. It is the ability to overcome the odds and to succeed despite the odds.

Mystery woman

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"Isabel," the new film by Joel Lamangan and the Manila Film Festival entry of Regal Films, has been billed as a romantic drama, a sexy film, the story of a woman who...Judy Ann Santos.

But it is really a psychological thriller that seeks to solve not a crime—though there is a crime or two in the movie—but a woman's life, a woman's personality, a woman's choices. Lamangan's direction and Santos' performance are what "Isabel" is a woman a woman's search for herself. But it also documents the search for the "real" Isabel by a man who has arranged her brutal but not her life. The film is the story of Isabel's search for her own personality and her search for herself. But it also documents the search for the "real" Isabel by a man who has arranged her brutal but not her life. The film is the story of Isabel's search for her own personality and her search for herself

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to ...

Editor Jose P. Sarmiento Jr.

Presidential tally: Where's the truth?

FORTY-ONE days after the May 10 elections, Congress has yet finished the counting of votes for president and vice president. With 46 of the 179 certificates of canvass (CoCs) still to be tabulated, President Macapagal-Arroyo was leading the count with 6,784,554 votes against Fernando Poe Jr.'s 6,582,670 votes.

Under the Constitution, a new president must be inaugurated on June 30.

But even before Congress started the canvassing, the head of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and lawyers of Ms Macapagal had claimed that the incumbent had won the presidential election.

A full-page ad in this newspaper on June 10 showed that Ms Macapagal won with 12,960,316 votes. Poe had 11,770,379 votes.

Lawyers of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said the results were based on CoCs that the Comelec used in proclaiming the winners of the senatorial race.

A quick count by the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) also showed Ms Macapagal ahead of Poe. When Namfrel ended its count on June 8, based on 79.21 percent of the 245,362 precincts, Ms Macapagal had 9.074 million votes and Poe, 8.138 million votes.

Opposition lawmakers questioned the Namfrel count, which they said was partial to Ms Macapagal, and the claims of the administration that the incumbent won.

They insist that the tabulation of votes for president and vice president be based on election returns (ERs) at the precinct level because of their doubts about the authenticity of the CoCs.

Confirming the tabulation based on the CoCs will allow Congress to declare a winner, most likely Ms Macapagal, before June 30, but many will doubt whether the actually got the most number of votes based on the ERs.

The truth is in election returns

By Roberto Verzola
Author, Towards a Rational Economy of Information (2006)

THE Commission on Elections (Comelec) says President Macapagal-Arroyo won by 1,065,569 votes. The Citizens' Congress has so far contested only Cotabato data. GMA's lead of 133,000 votes was going down when the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) ran its tally claims. The Namfrel claims says GMA won; the opposition says FPJ won. Where is the truth?

If the contents of those ballot boxes in Congress all boxes, we are probably as close to the true results of the vote as we can get. If they don't, the election results, ERs and statements of votes (SoVs) are probably closer to the truth than the certificates of canvass (CoCs).

But since the Congress canvassing committee refuses to compare them, we are left with the tally of Namfrel and the CoCs of Comelec-Congress to compare.

Namfrel's ER-based tally is probably closer to the truth: 1) it is based on samples with 200,000+ ERs than only 179 CoCs to base on extensive results, 2) it makes less sense to risk distorting a tally which is unofficial anyway and 3) can have who contests the ERs in the public view and Namfrel volunteers are more credible than Comelec-produced statements.

Unfortunately Namfrel's tally stopped on June 5 at 9 million votes, with 6.5 million remaining uncounted. The National Capital Region (NCR) had the most uncounted votes—1.2 million, Southern Tagalog, 800,000; Central Luzon, 400,000; Western Visayas, 611,000, and Bicol, 116,407.

Uncounted votes

Fortunately, we can estimate how those uncounted votes were per region. If we make a key assumption that each candidate got the same percentage share of those uncounted votes as in the already-counted votes. The math involves applying those percentages on the uncounted votes, going to Table 1 our Namfrel-based approximation of the result. It shows GMA winning by almost 334,000 votes or 1.13 percent, with 11.4 million votes counted, but still votes are uncounted. (See Table 1)

Using these results derived from Namfrel's practice-based tally as benchmarks, we can now check the discrepancies in the Comelec's province-based tally as published in full-page ads by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's lawyers. (See Table 2)

The two tallies agree very closely in Bicol, Eastern Visayas and Cagayan Valley.

Huge discrepancies occurred in Mindoro, Western Mindanao and Northern Mindanao, where Namfrel's votes exceeded Comelec-GMA votes. A major discrepancy showed up in Central Mindanao, where FPJ's lead was reduced from 396,208 to 97,468. Minor discrepancies in favor of GMA occurred in four regions. A major discrepancy was found in Central Luzon: FPJ lost by 59,911) and a minor discrepancy in Ilocos, both in favor of FPJ.

The Comelec-initiated tally showed a huge discrepancy in favor of GMA, but Namfrel over FPJ increasing from 204,000 to 1,007,000 (208 percent) and the regional average jumping from 3.9 to 19.6% (over to 6% in GMA's favor. This means that their CoC results are not much with the more credible ERs.

We can't conclude that the Comelec tally until our Namfrel-based estimates. One can, of course, argue that the Comelec is closer to the truth, and Namfrel wrong. But the burden of proof is on the Comelec-based tally showed a skew. Let us look at Namfrel Report No. 92 again, particularly where each candidate gained big leads. (See Table 3.)

Statistics

See how the Namfrel statisticians progressed where GMA led most? In their top bailiwick, GMA's Central Visayas (59.48 percent) was ahead of FPJ's Southern Tagalog (49.25 percent). In third place was Northern Mindanao, GMA's Western Visayas (26.06 percent) was ahead of FPJ's Cagayan Valley (25.06 percent). It was only Cordillera GMA (75.42 percent) that was behind FPJ's Ilocos (30.66 percent).

That a tiny GMA lead in Region No. 83 was 3.08 percent (313,000) instead of the slim margin of 133,000 votes (33,000,000 votes compared in our final results. This 0.95-percentage point difference is a measure of the skew in favor of GMA due to her bailiwicks contributing a disproportionate share to the Namfrel tally. This much than predicted our final Namfrel-based estimates, however, removed this skew.

Fake trend

In successive tallies, skews would sometimes have one candidate and at other times the other candidate. The Namfrel tally's first four days showed this series: first from the ERs-day dropout's No. 775 seconds, a skew about from 1.13 percent appeared, consistently in favor of GMA. The worst was on the sixth day, Sunday of May 16, when Namfrel announced an initial lead of 1.5 million in favor of GMA with a proportion of GMA votes in high than the Central Luzon lead changed from FPJ by 52,018 to GMA by 431,967 votes. This false trend persisted for only one day of the tally, when the lead switched back to FPJ, whose lead was still increasing slightly when Namfrel showed its tally.

On that Sunday alone, this false trend of GMA's popularity from Central Visayas and Central Luzon. GMA got a 1,051,804 lead, 4.7 times the 436,438 and she accumulated in the five previous days. Of course, FPJ's 396,208 lead she accumulated in the subsequent two days, and twice her 515,598-lead reported at the end of the tally.

The Tuesday spike leaves Monday's headlines, setting the tone for the entire second week, during which GMA's largely skewed lead reached 1.4 million. A powerful side-effect of this seemingly big lead was to demoralize FPJ watchers into thinking their cause was lost and abandoning their posts, leading to the outgoing of CoCs results.

Suspicion of skews

In the Namfrel tally's first eight days, Bigan blue, 1.14 counted 23.9 million votes, with GMA ahead by 1.6 million votes. The subsequent Report Nos. 10 to 92, covering the rest of the only-counted 12,750,000 votes, with FPJ ahead by 1.9 million votes. Note that the FPJ votes were counted relatively late (areal) and the GMA votes relatively early (urban). This was the source of the skew.

Let us revisit the assumption that in each region, each candidate got the same percentage share of the votes that are counted as in the 24.4 million already-counted. Given the area-skewed trend in the Namfrel tally, it seems more likely that GMA had less and FPJ more percentage share in the uncounted votes. Thus, 1.9MN lead is probably not that 204,000 and the discrepancy with the Comelec larger, but we do not know by how much. We use, therefore, conservative estimates only.

In Saturnina on Standard collection, and the tools and data Namfrel volunteers, the skews would favor neither candidate, intentionally or otherwise, by one or a few persons in the tabulation center deciding what votes to count/not count (areas and which ones to tabulate right away (areas).

Explain

Namfrel officials should explain this skew, especially their failure to inform in their daily information like the regional and provincial breakdown of the tally, as their Comelec accreditation required them to do, and their refusal to release this information to the public when asked to do so. Furthermore, they should scrutinize their tally even the last election returns in their possession. They owe this much to the thousands who volunteered in this their safety and their lives and the millions who placed their hopes on Namfrel's ability to quick, honest and complete count of the May 10 elections.

Cristina Herrera-Gutierrez is on the Filipino people to show that the numbers in those questioned CoCs match their corresponding SoVs and election returns.

The author is from electronics-mail.com

Blogspot for the author's four-part series on the results of the Namfrel tally are be made through www.bulatlat.ips.org.

We need Namfrel quick count

By Corazon N. Ignacio
Regional Director, Western Visayas Local Media

A long as elections are manually done from registration to counting, as long as senators and congressmen behave like clowns and spend precious nights on vote padrying instead of canvassing votes, as long as politicians spend money to get and short votes, as long as the Comelec engages in its "barely prepared, absolutely disorganized" dance routine before elections, Namfrel, the citizens' poll watchdog, will be necessary to conduct the Operation Quick Count (OQC).

Since 1986, Namfrel's OQC has provided the public with vote counts that are partial, unofficial, reliable, fair and consistent with the Comelec official figures was come to the public.

During the seven days after the election when all sorts of speculations, analyses, and canny sound bites gripped the nation of senior managers, Pharaoning Time, preachers, grandstanding politicians, new losers, and outdated election administrators, Namfrel's quick count was able to provide information and political stability by assuring the public that the votes were being counted by a trustworthy poll watch body duly accredited for the job by the Comelec. And more importantly over that has the track record, resources, and volunteer networks of doing a quick count.

Namfrel's relevance and service to the nation is by window because the closing of polls on Election Day and the time that some extremely mandated bodies can run the votes. The Comelec continues votes for senators and Congress, convened as the National Board of Canvassers, canvasses votes for president and vice president from levels of authority were provided by the Constitution).

The Comelec canvass usually starts seven to 10 days after Election Day when all the certificates of canvass (CoCs) and statement of votes (SoVs) from all the provinces and cities are in. The COC is the summarized statement of votes per candidate in Region and of votes per city in the tabulated entries of votes per precinct or town. In the case of the May 10 elections, the Comelec was able to proclaim the 12th senatorial winners on May 24 or two weeks after election day.

The national canvass by Congress usually starts 15 days after Election Day, when all the CoCs shall have been submitted by the provincial boards of canvassers to the Comelec. In the case of the May 10 elections, the members of Congress (Senate and the Lower House) spent the greater part of May 26, 27, 28 and 31 arguing on rules, procedures and membership of the canvassing body.

One can imagine the amount of confusion if Namfrel had no box on an earlier quick count. Fifteen days after the elections, no one had conducted and released quick count tallies. The nation was at a loss on who won the elections. Never mind if Namfrel's coverage of precincts counted reached only about 70 percent of the election returns (ERs) nationwide, this was useful information in a totally skeptical population.

Another relevance of the OQC is in providing inclusive of duplications by Comelec and Namfrel politicians, who subvert the electoral will by shaving and padding votes. Most Namfrel has been instrumental in rallies and held [illegible] the dark copy of the ER from the precinct's 2:30,361 precincts, this makes it difficult (if not impossible) to tamper with the votes level manipulate the statements of votes. Remember that the ERs comes in seven copies, with assigned destinations. Namfrel's copy (the sixth one) had it the past been used as evidence before the court or the Comelec in many election protests.

Jose Concepcion, Jr., Namfrel chair, has underscored time and again the power of the ERs.

Namfrel is able to track these ERs at the level through the entire city of the ERs. Because they can be accurate at the precinct level, it is possible to confirm or refute claims of actual incidence of cheating.

Namfrel's goal is to collect, secure to quick count operation once elections are announced. Namfrel does not stand to gain or perpetuate itself. The OQC should be unnecessary in an automated election scenario.

There are many other areas in electoral reform that deserve as much attention and concern as the OQC. Issue on campaign spending, voting, the level of voters' awareness on quality of candidates, encouraging better quality candidates to enter politics for service, cleansing of voters list and precinct-mapping disorder, declustering of poll boards of the Comelec and its commissioners, increasing measures to reduce election fraud, and of course, automation of the counting elections. Namfrel may also have to re-orient and reorganize to other equally critical concerns when its quick count function shall cease to be relevant.

Table 1: Results based on Namfrel data

Area	GMA Lead as of June 5	GMA Lead Total
C. Visayas	59,484	1,250,000
W. Visayas	107,808	800,000
Caraga	133,425	700,000
Bicol	70,103	74,103
ENR	48,140	50,000
ARM	47,351	47,351
C. Visayas	59,484	1,250,000
E. Mindo	13,936	14,300
W. Mindo	23,651	23,651
N. Mindo	37,358	37,400
C. Luzon	46,573	46,241
NCMM	20,140	19,731
Metro	165,286	108,309
S. Valley	111,328	106,000
S. Mindo	124,000	124,000
NCR	271,686	269,000
S. Tagalog	480,961	1,000,000
TOTAL	1,915,338	364,864

Table 2: Discrepancies between Namfrel and Comelec Tallies

Area	GMA Lead, Namfrel	GMA Lead, Comelec	Comelec GMA Lead Higher by	Percent Difference in Lead	Description of Discrepancy
Philippines	333,864	1,065,569	731,705	219.0%	Huge for GMA
N. Mindo	37,351	91,400	53,351	142.9%	Huge for GMA
ARMM	47,351	201,616	154,265	325.8%	Huge for GMA
E. Mindo	13,936	91,400	77,464	555.8%	Huge for GMA
C. Mindo	124,000	44,000	154,000	82.7%	Huge for GMA
S. Mindo	96,290	43,676	7,614	46.1%	Minor for GMA
CAR	41,351	96,000	53,351	28.8%	Minor for GMA
CAR	61,351	75,350	10,000	18.0%	Minor for GMA
C. Visayas	1,250,000	1,400,704	140,231	11.0%	Minor for GMA
Caraga	700,000	771,705	71,705	10.2%	
S. Tagalog	1,000,000	1,000,000	30,294	3.0%	
C. Valley	146,000	138,640	2,328	1.6%	
Bicol	70,104	71,000	24	0.0%	
E. Visayas	32,000	32,000	40	0.1%	
W. Visayas	800,000	800,000	40,351	5.0%	
NCR	264,000	404,351	10,776	3.1%	
Ilocos	133,000	132,000	10,000	10.0%	Minor for FPJ
C. Luzon	46,241	106,000	59,911	130.0%	Major for FPJ

Table 3: Results of unfinished Namfrel Tally based on Report No. 92

Area	GMA Lead	Percent of precincts reported	Area	FPJ Lead	Percent of precincts reported
C. Visayas	1,300,000	66.48	S. Tagalog	800,000	83.2%
W. Visayas	750,000	70.00	NCR	271,000	93.18
Caraga	700,000	83.9	C. Mindo	100,000	93.2%
Bicol	75,000	90.36	E. Mindo	13,000	70.36
ENR	48,140	73.00	Ilocos	100,000	90.00

Pondo ng Pinoy: 25¢ for the poor

(from page A1)

provide an alternative. And this is our alternative."

A crumb's weight

Pondo ng Pinoy is rooted in the "Theology of the Crumbs" based on the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in the gospel written by St. Luke.

The rich man feasted on good food every day while Lazarus, the beggar, lay by the door waiting for the crumbs to fall from the rich man's table.

Upon their deaths, Lazarus went to heaven, and the rich man, to hell.

Besudes said the rich man was not sent to hell because he was rich: "He was condemned because he did not allow even a mere Ching such as a crumb to fall in the way of Lazarus. Selfishness and greed, no matter how they are expressed, are what keep hell going."

"When the quarrel is over millions and billions, the stakes are for the devil, but when the issue is about crumbs and morsels, the obvious enemy is heaven."

Thus, the division of the Pondo ng Pinoy is "measuring, smuggling, kaha model, donor's method, or salvaging forgot (Whatever is good, no matter how small, as long as it is given regularly, is directed toward heaven)."

The weight of a crumb is 25 centavos, Rosales said, adding:

"Every Filipino believe in the goodness and love of God, expressed in Jesus like that, will set aside a 'crumb,' 25 centavos, every day."

Individuals and families are urged to save 25-centavo coins in small containers, such as empty sweet bottles or soft drink cans, and deliver them to their parishes or schools.

If each of the estimated 6 million Catholics in Metro Manila saves P1.75 a week, the donations will translate to P14 million weekly and P728 million annually.

More important, Rosales said, "the practice will make love and compassion a way of life."

61-percent poverty rate

Besides pay Pondo ng Pinoy would provide funds for new Missions "aimed development, and encourage the poor to be donors and not perpetual beggars.

A study by the Institute of Church and Social Issues pegged the poor and very poor at 32 percent of the population of Metro Manila. The poverty rate nationwide is even worse at 40 percent.

Father Carlos Manila director Fr. Aniceto Pascual said the foundation would give priority to livelihood initiatives, by Pedro because this was the biggest problem of urban dwellers. But he said housing, family welfare and restorative justice would also be supported.

The foundation will initially focus its support on the archdiocese of Manila, and the dioceses of Antipolo, Cubao, Caloocan, Pasig, Novaliches, Imus, Tarlac, Iriga, Malolos, Puerto Princesa, San Pablo and the military ordinariate.

There are 66 dioceses and archdioceses nationwide.

"The country needs people who seek what is truly good for its citizens without being blinded by narrow selfish ambitions," Rosales told the gathering. "We call these people statesmen. And when we see these are saved people with that selfless passion for... we mean you, and not the politicians."

P12-M inspiration

Pondo ng Pinoy was inspired by Pondo Kumagan, which Rosales put up in Lipa, Batangas, during his term as archbishop there. Pascual said the project collected P12 million in three years.

Rosales was installed archbishop of Manila in November 2003, replacing the retired Jaime Cardinal Sin who founded the archdiocese's 29 radio.

Even before he officially assumed office, Rosales had stressed the need for a community to work instead a vision. He had said a leader without a vision was guilty of treason.

Pondo ng Pinoy is his first project in Manila.

It will be supervised with the Secretariat and Exchange Commission, and will be governed by a board composed of eight bishops, four lay people and three priests.

Rosales pointed out that Pondo ng Pinoy was not a mere fund-raising campaign results to the corporate and political worlds' concept of development because it also involves liberating people from selfishness, viciousness and greed.

"Fast and foremost, it is an evangelization tool and solidarization process, he said.

"The result is a developed person shaped by the values, principles and attitude of a Christian who will know how to handle resources. So why talk about billions and billions when the person handling that is completely poorly stricken?" Rosales said in a press conference on June 16.

The archbishop added: "Jesus started with people. He strived to educate people, purify their intentions and clarify their values. This will change the perception of what a country ought to be."

'Kairos'

In an emotional moment at the closing of the pastoral assembly on June 12, Rosales reportedly pounded his chest and said: "Rito ramdam ko sa sarili."

This is the moment, he said, the Lord is in Greek, the opportune time, as opposed to chronos (the chronological time).

"This is our kairos. We should not allow this moment to pass us by," he said.

According to Rosales, the final aim of Pondo ng Pinoy is to help everyone "fulfillment of life."

He promised to go to all the dioceses, apostolic vicariates and sites of pastoral assemblies, to explain the foundation.

"Eto na, sabay na (Let's go, hop on)," he urged his audience.

It is clear that the archbishop will be the unifying voice and promoter of Pondo ng Pinoy.

MANILA ARCHBISHOP Gaudencio Rosales celebrates Mass at the launching of Pondo ng Pinoy: Building a foundation for the poor on 25 centavos.

After pullout, FPJ lawyers assail canvass

From page A1

Bellaroso, Cruz and other opposition lawyers issued a statement Friday night when they withdrew from the canvassing proceedings, charging harassment and bias.

No tomorrow

In a letter to the committee later, the lawyers said they would send a new legal team to represent him when the canvassing resumes its session tomorrow.

But for the committee, there was to be no tomorrow.

It went ahead and resumed counting votes yesterday, even without Poe's counsels.

Lawmakers allied with Poe voted not to pull out on their part, seeing it was better for them to stick it out so that the nation would know how their candidate was being allegedly cheated.

"We will be there. Otherwise, we will be playing to their crop—to get out of the canvassing so they can point to the committee that they will make use of if we're not there," Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. told the hearing.

Not in the cards

He also said "clogging it without it not in our vocabulary. We will stick it out."

Poe's lawyers and Pimentel may believe they are fighting for principles but as far as **Makabayang Suri** concerned, those trying to impugn the credibility of the canvass belonged to a desperate cabal.

"The opposition strategy is now obvious to the people: delay the canvass, portray themselves as the persecuted, fire up mass supporters, taint the canvassers, using the people as common fodder and stage a mutiny or heroes of a noble cause," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

"Any walkout by a cabal of anarchists and manipulators is doomed to fail," Bunye added. "The opposition must follow the Commission en Banc complete industries."

Lawyers Bellaroso and Cruz declared the decision of the administration-controlled canvassing panel to go ahead with the tabulation despite Poe's advice that he was sending a new legal team to Congress tomorrow.

"The plan, as far as we know, is that they will unformal it today so we'll not be able to secure replacements," Bellaroso said.

Poe's lawyers, as well as the associate for other opposition candidates, withdrew from the canvassing in protest against criminal charges filed against the actor's chief counsels—Rizalina Rodriguez and Harriet Demetriou—over the alleged abduction of an election officer and her daughter.

But and his vice presidential candidates, Sen. Loren Legarda, backed their pullout.

Due process'

Rodriguez accused the committee of violating Poe's right to due process and to counsel.

"What's due process? It should be fair and there should be lawyers of a party and [it's a thinking of getting lawyers to protect his right," Rodriguez said.

"What they're doing could not be considered valid," said Senate lawyer, committee Legarda.

Bellaroso said it would now be up to the opposition lawmakers to question the actions of the canvassing committee once it submits its final report to the joint session of Congress.

"In the final report, our senators and congressmen will fight for the issue even if they're a minority," Bellaroso said. "We'll probably ask for the annulment of whatever action done. It could be raised in the Supreme Court, others could raise it on the senate, others could raise it anywhere else."

Was their withdrawal part of a "No Proclamation" scenario, as alleged by Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez?

"That's rubbish," Demetriou said.

Poe lawyers . . .

From page A1

Acting Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez said the Department of Justice would pursue its investigation of the case against Rodriguez and Demetriou despite the withdrawal of opposition lawyers. Friday night from the national canvassing in Congress.

The other respondents in the case are retired police director Roberto Calderon, president of the Alliance of Democratic Jurists Atty. Maria Portia, head of the PNP in Ozamiz Silvestre C. Libay Jr. and several John Does.

Hall is also charged as principal in the abduction of election officer Hall, 52, from May 31 until June 9. They allegedly tried to convince Hadres to rally against the administration on the final day supposedly marked the May 10 elections.

Agents from Hall, then allegedly also abducted Nasrin Sahiba, a coordinator in Basilan of the Coalition for Peace and Justice Movement (PEJIC), and Hall's daughter, Pierdaniela, 20.

The three were allegedly held in several places in Misamis Oriental, including a cottage in Dumaguete City, Silliman in Bukidnon City and the PNP Station in Quezon City.

Harassment

But Demetriou and Rodriguez said the case was "political harassment."

Demetriou said that contrary to reports, Hall voluntarily met with her on June 3 in Dumaguete Village and later issued a sworn statement before a Makati prosecutor.

"She freely voluntarily executed the affidavit without duress," Demetriou said, recalling that Hall was at ease every time they met and even called her to express gratitude before leaving for Luzon again.

Hall brought some election returns (ERs) showing that more than 1,000 votes were shaved from Poe's votes and added to Ms. Macapagal's, Demetriou said.

Rodriguez said he had neither met Hall or her daughter nor visited them at their hotel suit.

Demetriou said the charges lodged against them were aimed at muzzling up the opposed fraud in Ppe Ppo.

"They want to gag the mouth by disputing this. This is the truth," she said. "This position we move for the joint (canvassing) committee to open the electoral returns."

Demetriou also lamented the CIDG's failure to inform her of the allegations before filing the charges.

"I went to their office last Friday, but they couldn't show me a copy of the charge sheet. There were copies for the media, but there was no copy for the accused," she said.

Long way to go

Gutierrez said she had assigned Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Miguel Padin Jr. to review the three-page complaint filed at the DOJ by Senior Insp. Jesus Salvigan, head of the CIDG's general investigation bureau.

"There is still a long way to go. [Padin] would still have to evaluate the complaint to see if there should be a preliminary investigation," she said.

"And if there is a preliminary investigation, there would still be another evaluation to determine if there is probable cause to file it in court after the respondents file their counter-affidavits," she added.

In the complaint, Salvigan chronicled the alleged events that transpired involving Hall and Sahiba from May 31 to June 4.

At around 6 a.m. of June 4, the three allegedly met Demetriou on the third floor of the Silliman City Hall of Justice.

"Hall was presented papers on which her name was nearly typed. Immediately, Ms. Demetriou made her sign the same without giving her the opportunity to read or scrutinize it," Salvigan said.

"Since she was very scared, all she could do was sign the documents," he added.

Crucial timing

In a statement, on Sen. Sonny Sagisag said the "harassment" of Demetriou and Rodriguez was "in contempt of Congress."

He said it also showed that the administration "is worried" about its nothing to win."

"The timing was crucial," Sagisag said. "The PNP and DOJ could have waited for next week. They clearly want to influence the pace of the [canvass] proceeding that is being lost in the battle for hearts and minds."

Sagisag also said the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos "would not have done something as crass, with no finesse at all."

"He was a criminal genius. Today, we only have criminals," Sagisag said, adding that "the Integrated Bar of the Philippines must protect lawyers from the aggression PNP and the DOJ and this passive Congress."

But there's more coming to the opposition.

Six Maguindanao election officers are accusing Poe's Bonhoeur ng Bagkakaisang Pilipino of offering money and security in exchange for "false" testimony that the election in their area was anomalous.

The officers, in their June 16 statements and reports to the Comelec law department and the office of the Chief Inspector Abalos, said unidentified BNP members approached them on separate occasions and asked for their testimony.

They said they rejected the offers as the election in their areas was generally "peaceful, orderly, credible and smooth."

They did not identify the BNP members in their handwritten statements, although one mentioned the name "Jun."

The officers who submitted reports and statements were Saidy Mamalinsa, the acting election officer for South Upi; Estelita Orbeso for Shariff Aguak; Rasmilo Manguilo for Datu Hoosan; Rawan Tesi for Pagalungan; Omar Maruandong for Barira; and Tuisma Bolcatan. It was not clear where Dalmont served as election officer.

They were part of the group of 27 election officers who supervised the elections in Maguindanao. With report from Marlon D' Blanfil, Rivaro Supa and Cynthia D. Balana

Salonga says history is not on FPJ's side

By Carlito Pablo

SALONGA

KIDDING aside, I am not on the side of actor Fernando Poe Jr. and he doesn't have the humility and grace to accept defeat.

Former Senator Jovito Salonga, a Poe supporter, said that the government set up the 1992 and 1998 elections do not support the move by the Poe camp to stop the ongoing canvassing by the joint committee of Congress.

"I am and have been a severe critic of GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo), but the circumstances and facts are against the present stand of FPJ and that of his lawyers," Salonga said in a statement.

Salonga was obviously referring to the rule filed before the Supreme Court by Poe ally Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. that questioned the legality of the 22-member canvassing committee as Congress has already adjourned its regular session.

Salonga noted that in both the 1992 and 1998 elections, the joint canvassing committee of Congress proceeded until the canvass even though the session's third had been adjourned.

Salonga recalled that the Congress then eventually constituted its joint session to resume the report of the canvassing committee, and proclaimed Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada as the winners of the 1992 and 1998 elections, respectively.

"I do not see any eminence in the argument of certain allies of the May 10, 2004 elections," Salonga said. "Evidently, both ex-President Franklin Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. acted properly followed in the 1992 and 1998 precedents."

In his petition filed last week, Pimentel argued that since Congress adjourned on June 11, the joint canvassing committee could not start anymore and there was no more Congress to submit its report.

But Salonga noted, "In re: 1992 and 1998, the session of the Senate was adjourned sine die (indefinitely), there being no other business, pending the submission of the joint committee report."

Referring to the current Congress, Salonga said: "The 13th Congress, which had convened itself into the National Board of Canvassers, can meet for the purpose of considering the joint committee report."

Salonga stressed that the National Board of Canvassers, which is in effect the entire Congress, is "co-terminous" with the 13th Congress.

Salonga said that Congress has a "legal existence only up to June 30, 2004," which is the date set by the 1987 Constitution when the terms of office of the incumbent President and all elected officials expire.

"So that when, like [illegible] of a) the canvass," said Salonga, obviously referring to the need to speed up the ongoing canvass.

Salonga's statement made no particular reference to Pimentel and the petition he had filed before the high tribunal.

But Salonga's statement noted that Pimentel and fellow Pasay ally Sen. Edgardo Angara were among those present on May 25, 1992 when the then Senate passed a resolution adjourning sine die.

Salonga recalled that the 8th Congress then met in joint public session on May 26, 1992 to canvass the votes for President and Vice President in the May 11, 1992 elections.

A joint committee was formed on May 28, 1992 and the 8th Congress convened again on June 11 to accept the committee's report and proclaim Ramos the winner in the same day.

Salonga sought but lost the presidency in the 1992 elections.

Salonga said that he was defending not only the Estrada case but also to the walkout from the session hall of Poe's lawyers on Friday night.

Salonga noted that the certificates of canvass now being tallied in Congress were the same COCs used by the Commission on Elections to proclaim the winners of the May 10 senatorial elections, who included Pimentel.

"Pimentel accepted the COCs and he was proclaimed the winner," Salonga said. "FPJ even went to the proclamation and congratulated his winning senatorial candidates."

Salonga said that since the Poe camp didn't object to those COCs for the senatorial candidates, then it shouldn't object to the same for the canvass of the presidential and vice presidential elections.

"They are to emerged," Salonga said, referring to the legal term that says one cannot deny something he had previously accepted or allowed.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BSP AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

GMA prepares for victory party

Turn to page A21

Opposition objections to the counting of the Cebu City CoC, announced from the observation of Senators Serge Osmeña and John Osmeña that there were conflicts in the figures reflected in the CoC and in the district tallies at certain areas of voters (SoV).

"We are not calling Lobregat cheats. We are calling (them) a few Lobregatons who tampered with election returns," said John Osmeña, who lost in his bid for another term in the Senate.

But a calm Serge Osmeña said the voters' turnout exceeded the number of registered voters in the two districts by 3,000.

Johns said that in some barangays in the south district of Cebu City, the number of votes cast for all presidential candidates exceeded the number of registered voters actually voted.

He said that only 70 percent cast their votes because it was raining at the time of the balloting.

"The turnout was pretty low but nevertheless, apparently thinking that no one would notice, the figure of the number of votes cast for presidential was far in excess of the number of those who voted," he said.

"If we check at the CoC, we see in an excess of ballot box because the CoCs are already there," John Osmeña added.

The committee agreed to defer counting the Cebu City vote. It also deferred the tabulation of ballot from Bicol, which widespread cheating also allegedly occurred.

As of 10 p.m., Mr Macapagal had posted 11,270,849 votes against Poe's 10,528,220 in 140 COCs tallied so far out of a total of 277.

Sen. Pimbi Lacson was in third with 3,753,796; Raul Roco had 1,979,466 and Eddie Villanueva, 1,063,957.

In the vice presidential contest, De Castro continued to lead with 13,951,298 votes against Legarda's 12,038,184 votes.

Henrietta Supino had 916,987 votes and Rodolfo Plaza, 912,515.

Teodoro Bacani, a new lawyer for Villanueva after Gabriela Pancho quit, told the panel that the evangelist would continue to be represented in the committee.

Opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara said the absence of Poe's lawyers in the canvassing would result in the proclamation of an "anomalous and bogus president because of manifest errors, omissions, and anomalies in the certificates of canvass."

Gorgi Remondo, chief of Mr Macapagal's campaign media bureau, said Cebu would be at the "heart of the President's campaign in appreciation of the Cebuanos."

"But no formal pleas yet, as I said it is our yet appropriate to talk about that at this time," said Remondo.

But Remondo said the President was likely to have his oath-taking ceremony at Rizal Park in Manila in keeping with tradition.

After she is sworn in by Chief Justice Hilario Davide, she will deliver her inaugural speech at the Quirino Grandstand, he said.

Remondo said the President would then go to Cebu to have the rest of her inaugural in the midst of the Cebuanos.

He said she was going to attend a 6 p.m. Mass in the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral.

Remondo said that to top off the formal inauguration full with the diplomatic corps and other VIPs, the President would prefer to have a "street party" where the ordinary folk could celebrate with her in the streets of Cebu City.

The President broke her self-imposed silence on the ongoing canvass and issued a stern warning to the opposition that she would protect the people and the Constitution on her life.

"I am committed in a quandary because I have to keep my power to constituent (lies in telling votes) are being contested in Congress," she said in a speech after inducting the photographers.

"But I must raise my voice in protection of the Republic," she said. "The president shall safeguard the people against murder and I shall stand by my oath to protect and defend the Constitution with life and honor."

She said: "The national voters not to not to hell to be linked to stand to a football field."

Bunye said: "As sure as the sun rises, there will be an inauguration of a president by June 30, 2004 because the people have rallied it and the Constitution mandates it."

Despite the withdrawal from the proceedings of opposition lawyers, Speaker Jose de Venecia said Congress would be able to proclaim the next president and vice president by Friday next week.

Visibly optimistic, De Venecia said that the canvassing panel had agreed to work overtime to finish the canvassing of votes by Sunday.

"We're going to work overtime tonight (Saturday) ... maybe until 3 a.m. and we decided to work on Sunday. By Sunday night, we will finish the remaining 27 or 28 COCs," said De Venecia.

He pointed out that it was imperative that the congressional canvassing committee should finish its job quickly to avoid a constitutional crisis.

"But it (the crisis) will not happen," said De Venecia.

Based on De Venecia's calculations, the canvassing committee will follow this tentative timeline:

- Work from Saturday to until dawn of Sunday, break for half a day, then resume Sunday afternoon and finish the remaining CoCs not counted.
- Pass a motion calling for the preparation of a joint report on Monday, followed by the preparation of the committee motion report, signing of the report will take place on Wednesday.
- After the signing, De Venecia and Senate President Franklin Drilon will announce the precision of Congress (possibly on Wednesday) to approve the canvassing committee report, and subsequently proclaim the president and the vice president on Friday.

"It is pretty sure that the motion will happen," said De Venecia.

The Speaker pointed out that the decision to postpone the canvassing of votes by the city of Cebu was reached after he and Drilon was apprised to set aside the questioned CoC to accommodate John Osmeña.

DEPUTY SPEAKER such canvassing canvass as cuckoo that Gonzales hangs the gavel to proceed with the canvassing even in the absence of opposition lawyers.

GMA ready to kiss, make up with 'termite'

Turn to page A21

soldiers who accused her of using the military to harass her critics in the presidency.

But those are bygones. Between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Panfilo "Ping" Lacson could be up their sets to a "kiss and makeup."

Lacson was Mr Macapagal's hand-picked political affairs and all-around troubleshooter when she was a senator and then vice president.

Their partnership broke up in July 2003 when Lacson publicly protested Mrs Macapagal's plans to appoint Hilarion Ermita of Batangas secretary replacing Teofisto Guingona.

Guingona had resigned over policy differences with the President.

At the height of their public feud, Lacson quit as director of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., a government-owned corporation.

First conversation

"Yes, we are corresponding terms but only on the phone," Lacson told the Inquirer.

"Someday is President, will say is the conversing energy as to this. Also having engagements etc. (The President called and said there are so many rumors about you. What have you been doing?)" he narrated in his first conversation with Mr Macapagal before the May 10 elections.

"He told I was being linked to the no-election plot. How could that be when I was even campaigning for Gloria Legarda, who is my cousin?" he said.

Lacson revealed that Mr Macapagal called him four times in the period before, during and after the May 10 elections. "I told her several times, I may be your cousin, but I am not your enemy," he said.

He said Mr Macapagal would call him again to verify reports about the "no-no" (no-election) plot allegedly hatched by the opposition to block her proclamation as president on June 30.

But the calls have stopped.

Lacson said the President must be busy "pressing that the people won't find out (the election) lies."

Confirmed

Retired Police Director Reynaldo Lacson confirmed that the two had spoken on the phone, adding that he had badgered the guy between the President and Lacson last month for "peace in the country."

"I am a broker for peace, not for Mr Macapagal," Reynaldo said.

Mr Macapagal named Lacson assistant secretary for transportation and communication last March, just before the election ban on appointments to government took effect. He had retired from the Philippine National Police the same month.

Reynaldo said his goal was to ask the civil society group Coalition of Philippine Affairs (Coparl, whose Lacson is secretary general, "not to move to destabilize the government."

"Malaki na naman, inbalik na ang Coca Cola (na ang tao), Coparl quips," he said. "The President is very thankful with this development."

Minor case

Reynaldo also confirmed he had visited the three Army captains detained in connection with the Jan. 26 press conference by the Lacson group.

He said he will ask Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita "to consider the situation" of the officers. "They did not mean harm. It was just a press conference," Reynaldo said.

"Mahaharsh naman ang desisyon nila (It's a minor case)," he also said.

In that (mission) held in the posh Ayala Alabang subdivision, the Lacson group denounced Mr Macapagal for using the Armed Forces to control the movements of presidential rivals Fred Ruiz, Reynaldo Fox Jr. and Panfilo Lacson.

They also demanded that Reynaldo step down for his involvement in partisan political activities.

Reynaldo, however, said he did not visit the other officers detained or connected with the Army siege at the Oakwood Premier in Makati City. "I don't have a field on (those boys)," Reynaldo said.

Known as the Magdalo group, the officers involved in the Oakwood mutiny also demanded the resignation of Mr Macapagal for mismanagement and corruption. Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and Gen. Efraim Abu, Gen. Victor Corpus resigned in the aftermath of the July 2003 mutiny.

Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Ingles

Target-shooting banker now protects depositors

By Clarissa S. Santos

BE DID not exactly need the money from a practical newspaper boy to school to fly in America during the era in "We found a way to fit in and fill his pockets at the same time.

Ricardo Tan, president and chief executive officer of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp., the government agency tasked to protect bank depositors, was about 10 years old when he worked as a newspaper boy in the area where he and two other siblings lived in San Francisco, California.

Newspaper boy

He remembers waking up at 4 a.m. the morning to pick up the San Francisco Chronicle, folding the papers and for an hour, filling his route of about 100 houses to deliver the goods.

For a newspaper receiving an allowance of $7.50 each week, which at that time could buy you a Hershey bar for five cents and fish and chips for a couple dollars, he found it amazing to earn about $8.00 in a month for distributing newspapers.

"I was being paid a dollar for each address each month. And each route is about 100 houses. So $100 a month is not bad. The funny thing is, I can't even remember anymore what I did with the money," says the PDIC chief, chuckling.

FIRST JOB

Not part of plan

He recalls he took the job when he was still adjusting to life in the US and did it for about two years. Living and studying in the US was not part of his family's plan.

"When I was accompanying my father in the US in 1949 for a United Nations conference, my mother convinced my father to let us, the kids, stay and study there. At the time, my brother and my sister stayed in San Francisco to study," says the PDIC chief. Ric's father, Carlos Tan, was a senator in 1949.

Despite his political roots, Ric's diverse interests have always been focused towards banking and finance. And when he was younger, the self-spoken PDIC chief was not—was not! not born garment-obsessed.

Sharpshooter

He was a member of the University of San Francisco's rifle team during the late '50s. From 1957 to 1960, he was also a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps of the University of London.

His team here bore a shot hard to become one of the 29 members of American Rifle Team in 1957 that competed all over the country. He recalls he could have been the Philippine representative to the 1964 Olympics for rifling but he chose to join a United Nations conference in Geneva.

"Looking back, I must have made the wrong choice. It would have been more exciting to tell my grandchildren that I joined the 1964 Olympics than being in

1977 in the Office of the President in Pasig.

(Ric only says, Ric being one of practice already at that time, it would have been an embarrassment for the country," says Ric.

The names of the rifle competitors in the 1964 Olympics only ranked below Ric in the 1957 US team, he recalls.

Banking and finance

After completing his undergraduate degree in the US and taking his studies in London, Ric came back to the Philippines in the early '60s to start his career in banking and finance.

"My early ambition when I graduated was to join the Central Bank, which I did," says the PDIC chief.

He started with the city's Bank, for a month before joining the CB as a senior economist in September 1960. From 1962 to 1965, he worked in Malacañang as a staff in the Office of the Executive Affairs.

Ric went back to England as the CB's Financial Attaché in the Philippine Embassy in 1965 until 1967.

With his family

When he returned to the country in 1965, he was tapped by Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. as head trust and treasury department and in 1976 to 1977, he was SGSC's VP for credits, loans and discounts.

Going into politics

While with RCBC in 1969, Ric suddenly decided to get politics a try. It was for the secretary of his hometown local (back to a) ex-city.

A friend with about P15,000 due his friends and family valued for him, Ric went home to his father's hometown in Leyte for the first time in his life and ran as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

"None of us was really interested in politics. But my father had just died and I wanted to do it for his memory. It was a feeling of [illegible] the most unselfish thing I ever did," he says. "Imagine, going to see my father's friends in Leyte. For the first time in my life I was supported by the Gibes-Villaroy," he adds.

Ric was not only a neophyte in politics, he was not even a registered voter. But he had loyal friends. He tackled Sol del Rosario who was then working at SGSC's affiliate Bureau of Investments.

Del Rosario, who still has now, headed the spin-off unit of National Power Corp. called Peoples, organized the "Friends of Ric Tan" or FORT for short, says the PDIC chief.

"I think I spent about P20,000. I borrowed P10,000 and my mother gave me P5,000. The rest came from contributions from FORT," he says.

TURN TO PAGE 2

With his family. His father, Carlos, was a Philippine senator.

She fended for others at 12; today she does RP proud

By Ayalin Z. Zosin
ATN Bloodstone Bureau

AMAGAN (center) receives the New Millennium Award for Business Leadership and Prestige from Trade Leaders' Club chair Arsenio Pardo Rodriguez (right) during a ceremony held in Zurich, Switzerland. Accompanying Amagan is her personal secretary, Sheila Cortes.

GENERAL Santos City—Her humble beginnings were not a stumbling block, instead it became an impetus that propelled her to set her heart in life.

Antoria Capitulo-Amagan, now a multi-awarded entrepreneur, learned the value of hard work, patience and perseverance when she was just a 12-year-old lass.

Though a third child in a brood of nine, Analiza, as she is called by her family and friends, was entrusted with more responsibilities at home primarily because she was more mature and hardworking.

Life became doubly hard for her when her mother got sick. More responsibilities were put on her shoulders, including preparing meals for the whole family.

Analiza's passion for cooking was likely enabled her to earn extra income for her family. She was pre-tested selling omelets, fruits and high-tech in the neighborhood before hometown's Fiesta Paseo de Paraiso.

Her father's income could hardly make both ends meet, prompting her to work at tender age.

Enterprising spirit

She got married to a Chinese-Filipino at the age of 16. Through her husband, she acquired more skills not only in cooking but also in running a business.

Everything was going well when another lass struck. She husband died leaving her as the sole provider of her five children. She was merely 21 years old then.

But she was so unyielding. She did not allow pinning setbacks and uncertainty to shatter her resolve to succeed. She proved to all what kind of stuff she was made of.

She went into several ventures to support her children—a restaurant, a beauty salon, real estate, trading in imported goods.

In 1995, she went to Malaysia in search of the proverbial greener pastures. She brought some imported goods for trading to the Lumbungan Tawang bus terminal, she decided to try the local market. She was the first local Moslem trader to ship out bananas to Manila.

Later, she was ordered that only 30 percent of the whole cargo was being processed in cashew. The rest—oil, betel, belly, internal organs and pangs—were sold to avian or fish meal, which did not command a better price in the market.

Using the technology she learned from her mom and Chinese husband, Analiza pioneered the processing of cassa meat into value-added products like cocoa, longganisa, otoshi, barbeque, tocino, sapsap, embutido, hotdog, hotdog, etc.

"Everything we do is profit and cashew, I said doing it to earn more. And I succeeded," says the 56-year-old Hanapong-Bata.

Even in crossover to the market is her own product. On a number occasion, Chinese visitors accompanied by the economics, Amagan plans to put up a livelihood specializing in bamboo lamps.

Other big fish producers have set trying to and also her products but they failed due to lack of technology and capacities.

Some, she says, offered her with big capital but on condition that her products will be exclusively sold to them. She turned down the offer.

Among the company's leading export products at present is cashew, among others, edible meat, cashew filler and latex, cleaner raw and nutshells. These are sold to the United States, Europe, Hongkong, Japan, Korea and the Middle East under the brand name "Sun Foods."

Going global

A & J Seafood products were strong those presented during the recent Philippine Trade Missions to the Middle East and Europe.

Inclusions from foreign buyers are from worldwide come our after the other, taking her to the about how her small business metamorphosized into a big one.

The company, which started out a small processing plant inside the city fishport complex, has really made a big leap forward.

From an initial P1.5 million capital in 1996, it grew to P40 million in just eight years.

The company now employs 12 regular workers and about 300 seasonal workers.

The couple credited the investment of Trade and Industry (DTI) in helping the company attain its current status.

The government agency helped in product development, market matching and financing.

Through the DTI, Amagan had attended seminars on product packaging and labeling, bar coding, pricing, costing and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).

The company recently observed Analiza's selling to the domestic market by foreign markets. Its processing plant is now HACCP-certified.

"At first, I was not thinking of going global. My target market then was the grassroots," she insists.

Many businesses abroad have placed orders for her products, but in of note she could not meet their demands due to the limited production capacity of her processing plant.

Government support

The company developed its own technology and brought out it has certified products, which are now acceptable worldwide, even in Islam countries, what it needs is full government support to meet the burgeoning demand of fresh local and international markets, as well as to make its products more globally competitive.

Analiza faced that the company's average daily production of two tons are not enough to meet the demand of customers in the city.

Last year, she availed of the financing under the Joining Program of Quedan-co. She used the amount in putting up a processing plant.

Her application for a P95 million loan from Land Bank had already been approved but the amount has yet to be released. She was hoping it would be released soon so she could start the construction of the company's new and bigger processing plant. She was expecting about 1.5 tons daily production once the new processing plant is put in place.

International award

Two years ago, the company was awarded the country's most outstanding SME in medium category' by the DTI.

But the most prestigious one came just last May 29 when it bagged the most-coveted New Millenium Award for Business Leadership and Prestige.

The selection committee for the lady here received Award for Business Leadership and Prestige based its decision on the information provided by the 7,000 entrepreneur members of the Trade Leaders' Club coming from 112 countries.

A & J Seafoods is the first Filipino company to receive such a citation from the prestigious Trade Leaders' Club based in Madrid, Spain.

The bright future ahead of Analiza's "Badge of Global Quality Distinction" was handed by the club's chair Arsenio Pardo Rodriguez to Amaga during the ceremony held in Zurich, Switzerland.

"Not only Manny Pacquiao, but also a small entrepreneur can make our city and the country proud," she says.

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CALTEX

What Drives You CALTEX

Telco provides free service, too

AFTER 10 years in finance managers at Smart Communications Inc., Rina Mariano declared "I've found motherlode."

From Saturday for the past two months, she takes a break from paying core financial transactions and employs related investors that takes up to 10 p.m. to give food and have pupils at the Pelaston Elementary school in Bataan. With her daughter Rita in tow, she joins some 10 fellow employees in the weekend activity.

Mariano is one of Smart's 6,000 volunteers for some employees active not under Service, or Smart Employees Responding to Volunteers to the Community and Environment.

Launched in December 2003, the unit found named 30, the-tree is a component of Smart Communities, an umbrella program for corporate social responsibility initiatives of the company and employees. The objective is to make a difference in the community and give back to it the

success Smart has achieved through its support.

Volunteerism is second nature to Smart employees. From the engineer who has to put up cell sites in the flying hectogon to the sales representative who winds a banner or fabric-mesh to use a cellular phone, employees have their own rules to tell them going that extra mile.

"I enjoy it. I love children, anyway, and the program is made for them," says Mariano of her Saturday stints in Bataan.

"I want people to feel the difference in having Smart within their reach."

Mrs. Bunoz, group head for Mobile Commerce which handles mobile banking services, led the books-gathering campaign. Her colleague, Debbie Tan, head for investor relations, participated in those counterpart Swallows. Both projects are supported by Smart's award-winning global trend-setting electronic Pass

DEBBIE Tan's PassPoint gathered 600 pairs of sneakers from employees.

Load product.

Nine Book and PassPoint spurred Smart's more than 5,000 employees nationwide to do an impromptu spring cleaning to gather old books

TURN TO

Target-shooting banker . . .

From page B1

The contributions almost paid off between a set of 16 customers from Tesco dubbed as Lotte, Sa- landed on the second spot.

"That was my only crack at politics. Since I was not even a registered voter at the precinct, my supporters just put ink on the thumb to show I voted," the PDIC chief says.

Tan worked at the Asian Development Bank for over 24 years until 1986. He then became the EVP PDIC from 1997 to 2004. He returned to consultancy until early 2005.

In February last year, he was appointed president and CEO of the state-owned deposit insurer where he has continued important reforms contained by his predecessors.

Continuing reforms

"This is a post-retirement job which I had quite challenging. There are important reforms we are trying to institute in PDIC that should transform us into a stronger and more efficient organization," says he.

Internally, the company is trying to discern ways to increase earnings. It is also planning to outsource non-core functions like asset management and liquidation so it could focus on its primary mandate which is to provide assurance to depositors and help regulate the financial sector.

Pending before Congress are amendments to the FDIC charter, which, if approved, would give the commission stronger regulatory powers.

"Public service is challenging and noble. I am very comfortable working with the government and I consider the PDIC appointment as going full circle. I wanted my career with government and I am also trying it to government," the PDIC chief notes.

WITH dignitaries at Buckingham Palace, 1968. Tan is at right.

In RP, eyewear users still go for the classics

By Margie Quimpo-Reyes

MATTEO Baldo, a tall Ivan Kahen who looks like he could be in GQ, opines that if only the Philippines were more stable, more investors, including his firm, would put money in the country.

Baldo is the sales manager for sunglasses of Safilo Pacsun Ltd., one of the top two makers of eyewear in the world whose brands include Gucci, Armani, Dior, Yves Saint Laurent and YSL.

By his own admission, sales of his products are doing very well in the country. Safilo eyewear are distributed locally by Benetton International.

Mel U Mercer, general manager of Benetton, says sales have been on the rise the past years, despite the crisis. And the growth has been consistently in double-digit figures.

Baldo cites the failed coup attempt at the Oakwood hotel last year that gave investors pause, causing many to shelve their plans of coming to the Philippines. But he says they are still keenly watching the developments in the country.

He, he points out, eyewear in Asia is fast becoming a big business. Singapore, alone, sales are growing tremendously in Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan, but he says business in the Philippines and Thailand are not far behind. Only, he, of course, is modest success story.

One step toward increasing sales in Asia was convincing the optical shops where their eyewear are distributed to improve window displays.

"It's a step forward to improve the image. An improved image can boost sales," he says.

At the same time with the recognition of Asia as a huge market potential, the fashion houses have always taken cognizance of the styles that suit the Asian taste, and culture and physique.

He says in the past this fashion houses would just give Safilo their designs and the firm would make the eyewear. But now the designers are looking at the practicality of their designs. He admits that many of the eyewear seen by models on the runway doesn't do well commercially.

While Japan and Korea are more daring to try faddish designs, other Asian countries like the Philippines will prefer the more conservative designs.

Baldo points out that while the setup around shades became the fashion in Europe, it did not sell so well in Asia largely because "Asian including Filipinos don't have high noses."

But this has also provided a wake up call to the designers to produce more designs that would sell.

"Now they are trying to come up with commercial styles but still fashionable," he says.

Benson admits that in the Philippines it is still the classic conservative designs that still do says this is why Gucci and more, by contrast, recently acquired by Safilo are doing well.

But general consumers still buy eyewear for fashion and not as protection against the sun.

In the Philippines, a tropical country, sales still peak only during January to April and Oct. December.

The eyewear business is general in the country has been growing especially with the proliferation of cheap shades from China.

Safilo creates both shades and frames. While its main competitor went into retail setting up their own outlets, Safilo has been acquiring more brands.

After last year's acquisition of Armani, it is setting its sites on other brands, Marc Jacobs, former designer of Louis Vuitton.

Benetton has 150 outlets all over the country. It has one stand alone at the Shangri-la Plaza Mall where they recently had an Armani anniversary where the ones carried only the latest styles from Armani.

The eyewear industry, like many designer-based business also has its problems/foibles.

Baldo says that has created even Japan, which used to be very strict on knock-offs already has to market for those.

And even in Japan, people buy them.

But brands carried by Benetton, Mercer says the key is the hologram sticker which is difficult to imitate.

BALDO of Safilo

MERON of Benetton

'Now they are trying to come up with commercial but still fashionable styles'

From toy balloons to filmmaking

THE MAN in a dark suit goes through the motions of a James Bond movie intro. In the next moments, he is dancing among the choirboys as he goes into action against the bad guys. His mission? To rescue a babe whom the villains had taunted up to a palm tree. One guy frees the babe and the youngster by collagen into the arena. Bada-zoo! Almost-hero-young-off heroine to some romantic destination.

A clip from the latest James Bond movie? Indeed not. It's a video destined for a wedding in Malaysia and the couple-concerns are a real-life bride and groom plus-acting their fantasies. Made by Imagenes Inc., of course.

This is the type of customized and sophisticated wedding documentaries, MTVs, ASPs and short films for a wide range of individuals and corporate clients that Imagenes has been noted. Established by photographer and video storyteller, Dominic H. Whanch, it is pioneer in the business.

Dodik it all to a ballpen now, Dominic grew up with ballpens and trimmings and pastes—and pany photographer—in daily fare.

It was not until he was a teenager, however, that Dominic had a flash interaction with a camera. This was on a summer in Ateneo High School in a class on film appreciation under Fr. Nick Cruz SJ. As part of the course, he had to produce a short film to-be-per-formed format. He went, "Wow, I can do this!"

Gifted by his father with a video camera upon graduation—ostensibly to help the family business—Dominic turned filmmaker. He was a one-man entrepreneur doing everything from start to finish. That was to be a corner in Ateneo High School in a class on film appreciation under Fr. Nick Cruz SJ. As part of the course, he had to produce a short film to-be-per-formed format. He went, "Wow, I can do this!"

Gifted by his father with a video camera upon graduation—ostensibly to help the family business—Dominic turned filmmaker. He was a one-man entrepreneur doing everything from start to finish. That was before he learned, as Dominic says today, that money doesn't grow on trees. Fifty was where he wanted to go, he realized. And so it was back to school for Dominic—on the Ateneo Regis Film Institute and UP Film Center, where he took up film direc-ting and cinematography classes.

By June 1992, Dominic's hobby had matured into a production office for set up business. "It is actually a less-hard-er type of business. All you need is a camera and some computers and you can start. In the beginning, I used my parents' credit card to buy my equipment, which is I have amortized. Today, you would need about half a million for the basic equipment. The chal-lenge, however, lies in finding clients."

Customer relations, Dominic stresses, is the all-important factor. "If you take care of your clients, this leads to many clients. The photos of brides and grooms we make serve as our calling cards. They establish our track record. Weddings are a one-time event which you can't recreate. So if you do quality work and your clients are satisfied they will remember you."

Imagenes's clients include Francis and Sharon (Cuneta) Pangilinan, Ogie and Michelle (Van Hoorne) Alcasid, Tonton and Gabel (Henra-do) Gutierrez, Annie Ebbinger and Cynthia Paul of Malaysia, Jenny and Tonnie Orchard-Angara, as well as defendant SC Gonzalez, Glaiza and Marvin Alcalde, Cecile and Judy-Ann Gaspar-ini—these include Armanpede in Palawan, Subaru, Chamber of Furniture Industries of the Phils., among others.

By 1998, Imagenes was stable but Dominic says it was still a spinning-off of entrepreneurship, lasting as he was in a formal business background. He is now remedying that by taking up his master's degree in entrepreneurship at the Asian Institute of Management.

As to when new Imagenes apart from the rest of the field, Dominic comments, "I have always wanted to be different. My creative team—about three people, myself being the only one over 30 (OK, so maybe—not) I brainstorm, ideate, we keep on looking for new ideas. We also work closely with our clients, hence, our videos are very customized. I guess that sets us apart from the others. I'm happy to say that people come to us because our work, even without any medias."

Quiet revolution takes place in Tawi-tawi

THE PEACEFUL islands of Tawi-Tawi hide a bastion of economic activity. (Inset) Fisherman-turned-entrepreneur prepares his fish for sale.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

A REVOLUTION is taking place in Tawi-Tawi.

No shots are fired. No arms invoked. Just small fishermen from the Tausug ethnic group are coming together to take their first crack at being entrepreneurs.

They are the first of 18 beneficiaries of the Tawi-Tawi Community-based Enterprise Development Assistance project funded by the New Zealand Embassy and implemented by the Philippine Business for Social Progress.

Tawi-tawi, which was separated from Jolo in 1973, is at the southernmost tip of the Philippines and considered one of the country's poorest provinces. It is about 30 minutes away from Sabah and its boats by fastcraft to Malaysia.

Under the community program established last year, the farmers are provided loans and training to establish and manage their own businesses, such as fish-drying and salt-making, to supplement their meager income from fishing.

The fishermen are organized into clusters to form an assembly line and to boost the milkmarket of running a business on their own.

Specific controls are likewise established to allow these groups to improve on their products and market them to a good price to-coastal traders.

For years, the farmer had to get cash and defend life from other members by Jolo or as far as Iloilo, doubling the income of the province of P22,317 where almost seven out of 10 are considered poor.

Rabbin S. Asturi, who went into salt-making, says in an interview that he now has become almost triple in P140 from producing about four sacks or 100 kilograms of salt, from just P50 from catching fish. And that was on a good day.

Asturi's experiences is replicated across the households involved in the program, but he says the benefits go well beyond just the increased income.

"One problem was not as much in the stomach but in the mind because we did not think that a brighter tomorrow was possible.

"This project has changed the mindset of our people who have been skeptical because of neglect and isolation. Now, we have a dream and we can aspire for something better," Asturi says.

He adds that the people, who have been used to solving problems on their own, are learning to work together to achieve a common goal.

"The project has improved our income. But more importantly, it changed the attitude of our people toward working together. We now appreciate the fact that much can be done when we put our minds and strength together for the general welfare," he says.

The New Zealand pledged its support to these bigger dreams by providing another P3 million worth of assistance to livelihood projects to beef up the fishermen's capability to produce and market their goods and to make their businesses flourish.

Edith Alih, head of the Muslim Upliftment Foundation of Tawi-Tawi Inc., which was tasked by PBSP to oversee the program, says it took a while to get the people to embrace the project.

Some were skeptical while others were hooked on the dole-out mentality thinking that they could just get the loan and not bother to pay.

"The most difficult part of the project is to get the people involved in the program and change their mentality. Others were cynical because many have come for one-shot projects. It took them a while to realize that are now sincere in our desire to help and that they had to work to pay their loan," Alih says.

Their growing income, however, was enough reason for them to have faith in the program and the fisher-men also a great motivator, Alih said.

As Chapter 13, verse 11 of the holy book of the Muslim says: "Surely Allah will not change the condition of a people if they do not change themselves."

Non-stop travel to NY, best kept holiday secret in France . . .

By Sandra Gurtia
Contributor

TO CELEBRATE their new, non-stop service to New York, Cathay Pacific will give fourteen class passengers, who will travel to New York from Manila or Cebu between July 1-31, 2004, 50 percent more than Miles (on top of the regular mileage they will earn for the trip). Then-frisk Miles members who are availing of the promo will automatically get 3,000 miles when they sign up for membership.

Singapore Airlines will fly non-stop from Singapore to New York on the new A340-500 starting June 28, 2004.

Travel time will be shortened by four hours.

SIA launched a raffle where a pair of Bulgari diamond Clasi earrings is the alternative economy Class tickets on SIAs A340-500 are up for the winning.

Enter the "More Time to Spare?" online contest by submitting a short description of your favorite activities or places to visit in Singapore or New York if you have four hours to spare.

Contest is until July 31, 2004.

Secret addresses

"Looking for sartorial elegance on a drain-more budget? Look no further than the 3rd Ninth Side Shop—men's wear, women's wear, accessories from last season are sold here at 75-percent discount. Slightly damaged inventory from the current season's and samples are sold here too. Go home with a full wardrobe!"

Paul Smith Sale Shop—23 Avery Row, Mayfair, London W1. | Near Davidson Hotel.

"If you get dressy after all that shopping the place to go for great food and the freshest oysters and oddest Guinness is The Cow Pub. Pub is a no nonsense pub that serves food at reasonable prices. Good Music is played here. Very unpretentious."

The Cow Pembroke St Pitt Road, Notting Hill, London W2. "If you are craving for fish and chips, the best place to go to is Gruden Very, very good fish with your choice of cod, salmon, skate, rock salmon etc.

A good retro fat tax. (This is Mick Jagger's local)."

Gruden, 10 Fulham Street, London WS [near Notting Hill Tube Station].

"The best kept secret in France is go on holiday is Belle Ile en Mer in Brittany off the south Breton coast. Undeveloped, wild, craggy...one can cycle the unspoiled seaside trails, or swim in several different coves. There have several restaurants also serving seafood (inexpensive, tasteful etc), crepes, French fare staples. There is also a wonderful spa specializing in Thalitos (sea water) therapy. Thalland has been innovational by Marese Dionne and was home to Sarah Bernhardt."—Secret addresses of Stephen Carroll, global marketing director, Sony Mobile

Telco provides free service, too

From page B3

and rubber shoes that are still in good condition. The main beneficiary of Mea Book is the Smith Parish Elementary School in Jolo, Sulu, and 8 branches of five other public elementary schools in different provinces. The members, meanwhile, will go to the Pangang Shelter for Boys.

Initially intended only for employees, the book project drew support also from their friends. It was a bonus, as it enhanced Smart's relationship with external communities and spread the goodwill further, remarks Ibarra.

Pass Book collected about 20,000 books and raised P595,000. At the Smith Parish Elementary School, it brought the student-to-book ratio to 1:1 from 5:1.

As for PassBook, Tan got the idea while watching a basketball game between the Ningas ng Shelter kids and the TEL-Tarsar team.

"I noticed, most of the kids were only in trousers. I thought that if I can get Smart employees to donate rubber shoes, that hundreds of kids in shelters will benefit," says Tan. The campaign collected some 600 pairs of shoes.

Smart's Service has five programs, each with activities chosen based on informal surveys, on employee profile (average age 27, with roughly half still single) and on the company's dynamic and fun-paced culture.

Maestro's Makaan Reading and tutoring activity and Smart's Pass Book both fall under the Adopt-a-School program, which seeks to address the basic needs of public school students. Smart volunteers have tutored 160 pupils and donated books.

Tan's PassPhoto is an activity of Friends On Mobile, which supports projects on youth, women, families, sports, farming, environment, people with disabilities, information technology. Other beneficiaries are Shiny Day orphans.

The other service programs are:

Environment and responsible travel, which supports communities engaged in eco-tourism and in sustainable management and protection of natural resources. Volunteers have "sampled" and given feedback on community eco-tours in Iloilo, Aklan, Bohol and Palawan.

Emergency preparedness, which involves training in health services, first aid, and search and rescue, in collaboration with the Philippine National Red Cross. Volunteers have held blood donation activities and assisted Red Cross teams in first aid stations during town fiestas in Cebu.

PGH Cancer Institute Foundation, which raises funds for the Cerebral Cancer Care Fund for indigent patients and organizing a Cervical Cancer Support Group. Employee donations have reached more than P600,000, with the company matching the amount. As an estimated P50,000 per patient, the funds raised plus the company counterpart will finance the radiation and chemotherapy expenses of 48 patients. Cervical cancer is curable, but lack of awareness and inaccessibility of treatment, especially to low-income patients, make it the second deadliest type of cancer among Filipino women, Ibarra J. Filibuster.

SUNDAY, JUNE 20, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Sunday LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 20U • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY HOME & FASHION • SUNDAY SURPRISES

Kickin' and pluckin'

Roberto de Ocampo is a finance whiz, a classical guitar player, a taekwondo black belter, a proud father and a future spoiler of grandkids

By Pam Porter,
daughter of Nene D. Porter

ROBERTO de Ocampo, president of the Asian Institute of Management and former finance secretary, has a reputation for being reserved.

"I don't normally show my emotions, whether it's happiness or sadness," he says.

But when he talks about his four children, his face lights up with pride.

Robbie Martin, 27, is an actor on Broadway and in Hollywood. "Last year, he was the recipient of the off-Broadway acting award," says the father with great pride.

IN THIS ISSUE

MORE dads and their hobbies

LOVE and affection never undimmed /C7

BOCELLI basks in the warmth of the Filipino /C8

Alexander Wongchuking believes it was his destiny to look after his late father's rare collection of vintage Mercedes-Benzes

WONGCHUKING was a skilled driver at a young man. Today, she functions him taking care of these cars, including this Rosenthal treasure, a rare 1951 220a convertible.

Driving Old Glory

By Anne A. Jardaleza, daughter of Santiago B. Jardaleza

WHEN Wong Chu Ring Sr. took a trip to Europe in the early 1950s, a Dutch business partner who was a car enthusiast accompanied him to Belgium and sparked his affection for Mercedes-Benz automobiles. So taken was the Chinese-Filipino by this German luxury car that he never bought cars from other markets thereafter.

It must have been then, his son, Alexander O. Wongchuking, believes, that the seed was planted for a love affair with vintage automobiles that would blossom in the collection. "Hobbies run in the family," he says.

Accidental passion

The fifth of six children, Wongchuking, inspired to delve for 14 years, is director and vice president of the family-owned Mighty Grip Tobacco Co., formerly La Campana Tobacco Co. A father of two, he says his passion for vintage cars was "accidental," Well, sort of.

Upon his father's demise in 1987, he felt a responsibility to preserve his father's treasure. He says the Mercedes look of endowing and maintaining vintage cars, suggesting as a way to establish one's identity as a man of means. He says his motivation was his duty. It was his filial obligation to keep alive the memory of his father's peculiar fondness for the brand.

There, however, has sought Wongchuking's keen appreciation for the cars. To date it is a passion he cannot explain. The young businessman-cum-collector cites of his cars as if they were his children, never hesitating to specify to them. "Cars are a manifestation of who you are," he says.

His father bought seven Mercedes-Benzes in his lifetime—cars he gave away to friends, and one the young Wongchuking gave to another. "By the time you like the car, I have the passion for them, especially the classics."

His most prized possession, possibly the only one in the Philippines, is a 1951 220a convertible, a car extremely rare that rare years ago it was featured in the German magazine Highlight.

This elegant machine with imported leather finish and handsome body is one of the last of its kind put out in the market.

It is the very same model, he says, that Adolf Hitler rode in throughout Germany at the peak of the Third Reich's invasion of Europe. Look closely into old photos of the late German dictator perched on a convertible with his right arm defiantly raised to the air and know that this car is, in fact, the same actual as Wongchuking's.

And this helps to add to his elements, so to speak—the classic gear, racing at speeds. All parts are original, including the genuine German seat and the period Becker radio. In mint running condition, the car is valued by Wongchuking on a leisurely drive around 3.8 liters and fourteen, 400kg/s, at least twice a week, attracting admiring and curious stares.

"Hilang maglo-carrap ryan kan madaling malaman, eh. [Besides], it's so expensive to maintain it," Wongchuking says.

Obscenely expensive

Keeping his classics in excellent condition is such an obscenely expensive hobby that Wongchuking's mother has been prodding him to sell them. But that's not going to happen anytime soon—nor is it using Wongchuking's lifetime, anyway.

The cost? For starters, a dependable family chauffeur of over 16 years. An Australian Pathfinder, a rare Benz engine every day for about 15 minutes, and wireless, winter and buffet bills, ideally paying attention to details as he has well has acquired a sense of kinship with the automobiles. Photographing, aside from his collection of four fine Benzes—the 1951 220a convertible, a 1960 300d Adenauer Limousine, 1970 and 1972 280s sedans—has, there other cars—a Jaguar, a Honda and a Nissan Patrol.)

"Funny na din yan, eh. You have to give it a bath daily or else it will smell," he says.

Aside from his chauffeur, Wongchuking has for several years a personal mechanic, employed by Mercedes-Benz Phils., who comes to his garage twice a week for routine checkups and fine-tuning. And all that workup does not come cheap. The new 280s sedans can will reportedly set anyone the tipping, uphill reality to Rogue City.

While the monthly bill is a sizable chunk, having some of the cars refurbished—two of them are being restored right now—is another story. Parts are difficult to get and have to be ordered from the Mercedes-Benz Classic Division in Stuttgart.

"Maintaining old cars is no joke. You have to give them the special number, and they pass that to the classic division for the materials before the part can be originally made for you," he says. Restoring his 1960 300d Adenauer alone has so far cost him nearly P1 million.

But things always work out in the end, he says. His 220a convertible is currently hogged the Ford plates as Ford European Heritage and earned the commemorative Millennium Car award at the recent 2004 Transport Show in Old Shipyard. He has plans to join another car show this September in hopes of grabbing the championship award.

Aside from cars, Wongchuking has a collection of 16 guns, among them a few rare models—all with papers and permits; numismatic sculptures acquired from trips abroad; ids dogs, among them two mini-dachshunds and cockatiels; fighting cocks, which he breeds and sells like a side business on money for his land collection.

He hopes to pass on his increasing passion ownership to his sons so they, too, will tell tales of how their grandfather came to the country before World War II and got hooked on fine automobiles. He anticipates finding partner passions and literally rolled in the arches of the earth to take about his collection.

For now, Wongchuking, whose family owns and runs the country's oldest cigarette factory, is neither selling nor buying other vintage automobiles. The passing of his current babies is satisfaction enough.

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Kickin' and pluckin'

BLACKBELT Dr. Ocampo's international parents have influenced his children. Besides music, they have taken up taekwondo like their father.

And Olivia, 26, is the front office manager of Mint Mentor. ("She's the only married one") Annie Ignacio, 23, is a physical fitness trainer and a passionate of different martial arts. ("She runs taekwondo training sessions in the United States.") Bea, 21, is in music school at the University of Michigan. ("She's taking voice. She's singer.")

They may all be far away but they are undoubtedly very close to their father's heart.

Vivid recollection

Dr. Ocampo was 20 years old when he first became a dad. He still remembers the experience vividly.

"It was wonderful. It was one of the most memorable experiences of my life. It was a little scary. I was pacing all the time, my wife (Maria Carolina Gil)'s was giving birth in the maternity ward and I was outside pacing back and forth. It took 16 hours. I think, I couldn't eat. At the end, of it all, I had a big headache from all the worries. When it was all over and I was looking at my first baby, I was thrilled, ecstatic. You feel so in awe of the miracle of the whole thing."

After his years into the marriage, Dr. Ocampo moved his family to the United States.

"My children were born and raised in the US but we didn't raise them like the voracious, street-thirsty types that American kids tend to be. My wife is strict. I tend to be the nice guy-spoiler," he says.

In 1987, he had to come back to the Philippines. The transition was difficult but Dr. Ocampo made the most of it by searching relationships of his kids and spending a lot of money on phone calls.

As a man of many passions, he believes he must also help his children to be well-rounded.

"I play the guitar and my son picks up the guitar and starts playing as well. He got into it. I started taekwondo then all followed into taekwondo," he says.

His love affair with music began when he was young. "My parents wanted me to be getting me to learn piano. I wasn't too bad at it but the strict teachers dampened my enthusiasm for piano."

Fortunately his desire for music remained. "When I was in early college, I started thinking of getting back to music or some other activities. At that time, people were into guitar rock groups. I saw the sort of guy who would always do something a little bit different. I did do guitar but I did drums of guitar. At that time, you can easily walk into Fingers [a now-many people were dabbled in it," he recalls.

Call it true coincidence, but he made this chosen around the time the first serious Eurodeal gained momentum at the Philippines started offering lessons.

"He was a Spanish master who was working in the Basque mines," says Dr. Ocampo, who was 18 at the time. The man decided to give up mining to teach classical Spanish guitar. "I was one of his first disciples. He was so serious that it was becoming hard you couldn't make an impression like the guitar got all those rounds. I got pretty much involved in it to the point where I was good enough to have performances for friends, family and girlfriends."

It didn't surprise him that his son chose the guitar of all instruments. "My eldest son is quite soloist," he says. "He consciously taught himself. He's quite good at blues guitar. The [other children] objected up equally to other musical instruments at different points in their life."

Girl magnet

Married into a number passions of Dr. Ocampo's. "When I was in high school I was dabbling in different kinds of martial arts. I did a pretty lot fitness and pretty become an attractive girl. When Bruce Lee became a big deal, that was when many entered in."

But it was when he was in the United States that he decided to get serious about it.

"I was fairly good at golf then, but I was looking for a sport that I could play even in the winter," explains Dr. Ocampo. "I was living in Washington, D.C., at that time where there was a prominent taekwondo school. I started and continued all the way to black belt level."

Although it was difficult in the beginning, Dr. Ocampo worked hard. "Trainer's as young as I want to be. Nevertheless, I was still fairly flexible so it didn't take me long to be able to stretch properly. The originator of me kun martial arts training can have your tongue coming out of your mouth all the way to your navel. It was good exercise, physical fitness, discipline mind-wise, soul-wise, self-defense."

And his entire family discovered a passion for his hobby as well.

"All of my kids are black belts," says Dr. Ocampo. My wife is a brown belt. We had a master. The family then fights together sometimes together." Not because in the D'Lo Ishiyuri style, trophy upon trophy because my kids became really good at it. They joined Little Olympics and go to various clubs to competes, and they'd come home with their plaid trophies that were almost as tall as they are."

These days, despite his busy workhikes, Dr. Ocampo still finds enough energy for martial arts. He practices speed boxing five times a week in the mornings.

"I maintain my proficiency in kicks, in stretching and speed boxing. Every night, I do my routine of stretches so I can still do splits like a better dancer ever up to now. My kicks are still flexible enough that even if you are ten feet tall I can kick you there," he says with an ironical chuckle.

And now, of course, there's his other passion—golf.

It now seems that this kinds master will life is already packed with entertainment, but Dr. Ocampo knows that the future still holds a lot of thrills for him.

"How kind of a grandfather does he think he would be?

"An absolute cipher," he says, now twinkling in anticipation.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

ERNIE Pantangco rides his Ducati

Creatures great and small; gadgets, too

By Constancia C. Tajora,
son of Pacifico G. Tajora

ERNESTO Pantangco, 63, looks like the upright yet amiable father who instinctively herds his brood in the evening.

A mechanical engineer graduate from De La Salle College Inc is the chief operating officer of Rotating Friction Power Corp (read: a company of 1,732 employees, the plant is the third biggest in the industry). He is also executive vice president of First Generation Holdings (RPC's parent company).

Pantangco has been married for 26 years to Judith Ongsh, who runs the food-processing business. They make their home in a Makati village.

The couple has six kids: Mona Jose Pantangco, or Lay Jo, 25, civil engineering graduate from De La Salle University; Ana Elisa Pantangco, or Joey, 23, export management student at BLSU; Jose Miguel, 23, communication technology management graduate from Instituto de Monte Bello (only, Sud Antonio, or Iggy, 20, BS-Biology freshman at Ateneo; Jose Ignacio, 16, first-year student at Xavier School; Angela, 13, Grade 8 student at Assumption College.

Pantangco says they're a close-knit family. They attend Mass every Sunday. He and his eldest son go on a boys' night-out every other month.

With his youngest Angela he would drive around in a convertible on weekends, "pedro-driving." "Or sometimes they'd visit the pet shops in Cubao."

Because these are among Pantangco's passions: motorbikes and exotic pets.

Broader creatures

In a glass vivarium on a wall of the garage sleeping under sawdust are two pets, an adult Python from Africa and a Rainbow Python from the Americas. Still young, the vivarium's are destined but capable of expanding double their size when they outgrow what's the first enlargement being bid them.

They're still easy to maintain, with each given only two meals a week. A meal consists of one mouse, or P10 a mouse from Carmen.

"Some [we've had] trouble [with], and they become sluggish," explains Pantangco.

He started in 1970 with an Indian python, which he sold when it got bigger. He now find an enthusiast zone, which he also disposed of because it was "sudden lamak," have sung their, gawa ng sipahan mo dito—at mahirapan.

Pantangco is also a member of the Philippine Amusement Lo Ban Society.

A big superstar on the pond's vivarium: a small, very old iguana, a grizzled swimmer with flat, long, crustacean-silver body with reddish belly and large scales, she variety comes from Indonesia, it costs some P40,000.

Much on top of the fish, too—which can cost P1,15,000 apiece," says Pantangco. "Your fin may any blue."

A book of superstars in the garage is filled with 50 Mini, Koi Top headed Chinese fish which has become a craze for some of the red and black marks on its body that resemble Chinese characters. Pantangco has both the calligraphic Red Crowned and the plain yet

CONTINUED ON

Breeding furry bundles of joy

By Rowena C. Burgos
daughter of Roberto G. Burgos

Through the years, dogs have been cherished like family in the home of Ed Natividad

ED NATIVIDAD and his family have never felt alone since Pepper, Sasha, Shooter, Tootsie, Mics and Migi have started living with them. These dogs are always by the family's side ready to protect them.

Pepper, Sasha and Shooter are labrador retrievers, Tootsie is a chihuahua, Mics, a shih-tzu/mixed, and Migi, a mini-pinscher.

Through these canines, Natividad, his wife Lita and daughters Jinky 27, Marchet, 22, and Princess, 19, have learned the power of human-animal bonds.

"We all crave affection, but sometimes we have difficulty obtaining it from other people. Such compassion animals provide friendship, constancy and love. They're always there, always happy to see you," Natividad says.

A consultant for companies that are into pottery and plastic manufacturing, Natividad used to work as manufacturing manager in Pampanga. He would use his family only once a month.

"I would often worry about the safety of my family. It's thought of getting him lord, dogs to serve as their guards," he says.

Eventually, he decided to resign from his job and went into consultancy. Nowadays, he attends to the needs of his canine companions a week.

After the first four dogs died, Natividad purchased a labrador that he named Pepper in 2001. He studied how to breed dogs through his sister's cousin and a neighbor, who are both veterinarians.

Together with mutual doctor and breeder's assistance, he delivered Pepper's nine puppies. The birthing started at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 2:30 p.m.

"Dogs are like humans. You have to be at their side while they're experiencing labor pains. Huwag mo silang iwan kung hirap na. Mahahalata mong may kausap ka ang buhay," Natividad recalls.

When Pepper was still breastfeeding her puppies, Natividad would transfer them from one nipple to another every two hours so each would have a fair share of their mother's milk. "Yung iba kasi subtong tuksuhan. Kaunsa naman ang mahihirang kumuha ng gatas sa mama nila," he explains.

All through the eight-week-stint their birth, he would watch over the puppies until the new home of the incoming, which would make him feel sleepy at work. When he'd go out, his daughters and the maid would take care of the canines.

When the dogs' immunization had been completed, he started taking them out of the house. All eight puppies are still alive, except for one that died a few days after delivery. Six have been sold to his friends in Laguna and Pangasinan. The male dogs are priced at P8,000 and the female, P10,000. On his own time, he visits them that have been taken to Laguna.

"Yung ibang kaibu, kuwa na. Yung mga nilalo namen, tulong magagalit. Ewig isang mas Pangasinan, nakita ko nung dinroliver ang aking kaibigan sa pamagitan," Natividad says with a smile.

Source of joy

Natividad kept two of Pepper's puppies, Sasha and Shooter. From this happy source, he's expecting a bundle of cute kitten new week. He's now looking for friends who will be interested to take care of them.

"I grew so well my puppies to people whom I have known for a long time. In that way, I won't worry about them once they're separated from us," Natividad says.

Through the years, Pepper, Sasha, Shooter, Tootsie, Mics and Migi have been cherished like family. For The Natividads, these pets are among the most important things in their lives.

"They have been a source of joy and inspiration to us," says Natividad.

Despite his ruthless, hit wife, an area manager of a fast-food chain, seems to the friendly and playful animals. She even sleeps with the Labrador Sasha.

"She don't mind the dirt or cat room because she loves small dogs go there any time they like, as sometimes they stay in the rooms of our daughters," Natividad says.

Tootsie and dachshund Mics are kept inside the house while Pepper, Sasha, Shooter and whippet Migi stay in the driveway. They cannot stay in one area, says the owners, because they end up fighting after playing for a few minutes.

Natividad spends much of his time looking after the animals—buying their favorite treats, playing with them and grooming them.

"They have been my stress-relievers. One by one, I walk them around the subdivision every morning. They love making frolic when it rains, especially when a hose is used in washing them. When they see a huge house with water, they just stay there."

When their family is on out-of-town or international trips, Natividad requests the assistant of Dr. Intahonne to feed the dogs and look after them from time to time. Whenever he is, he never fails to call every day just to check on them.

"It's not difficult to cuddle the time between work, family and dogs. Breakfast and dinner are bonding time with my family. They've never been jealous of the attention I shower on one pet. When the dogs misbehave and I start to beat them, my children always get mad at me. I needed to accompany them to their late-night grocery. But now I just wait for them at home together with the dogs," says Natividad, who's now planning to breed three more cute-pet.

E-mail the author at burgos@inquirer.com.ph

NATIVIDAD and his labrador retriever Sasha

WITH daughter Angela and his Newfoundland cupbuni

MINI COOPER

Creatures great and small; gadgets, too

Among Ernesto Puntangco's passions are exotic pets, motorbikes and remote-controlled toys

From page D1

owned other recent varieties called Golden Phoenix and Hamebeta.

The fishes are not high-maintenance, either. The aerators feeds only every other day, and he gives a multivitamin or shrimp "para lumabas ang pulang kulay." And when they've grown, he can choose to swap them or sell them for a profit.

"Breeding and monitoring lasts long," he says, "and changes of water every two weeks."

HIS Ball Python Imeelda'ma

Big toys for big boys

The hobby-site is most passionate about is usually the more expensive, and one clings to it like

To page D3

Hobby with Puntangco

In 1975, while still working in a bank, he learned how to ride a motorcycle. The first motor he bought a Honda 175 (750 cc) in 1980, an R100 RS (1,000 cc) in 2000, and a 1150 RT (1,100 cc).

The last, big and powerful, he used to ride for touring through Tagaytay, Nasugbu, Batangas. But all those he had sold through the years.

Today, he has settled for just one vintage racing bike, a red Ducati 916 (Campione del Mondo Superbikes, 1997 model), and two vintage BMWs, a black R90 (1988 cc, 1990 model) and a silver R60 (600 cc, 1975 model).

For weekend rides, he usually uses the old-style police motorcycle R80, as it has a more comfortable seat and a more manageable speed at 140 kph.

The bikes are BMW, comfortable," says Puntangco. Any the master, so something or neighboring to my motives. Any BMW solid things you in, your car."

No less a passion

A wealthy but no less passionate hobby is the assembly of pieces of the chassis of plastic and fiberglass into-scale, custom-built toys, of which he has a number displayed in an entrance.

These are exact replicas of his motorcycles, the Battleship Yamato (the world's biggest), the toughest Pokémon-man of the United Tuxedo, armored cops, Hattori Hanzo (Ninja Assassin), Tauren (Juggernaut).

"It's like building here a," he says of this hobby's link to his engineering background. "Methods. That toplevel took six months to make. The most alone has 800 pieces. An armored car I can finish in a week. Any malunawa'y'am patanong, huwaran ni's camouflage design."

He also had four old cars restored to AC conditions: a red 1974 Mini Cooper (1,098 cc) and a British racing green 1990 model (1,300 cc). Small and compactly-sized, they'd fit in Manila floods.

"Gaining billion or alive, para pino-sa-sulit to lalo," he smiles.

At least two of his children have taken on his hobbies. Joey has developed a fondness for the bikes, and Angela, the motorcycles.

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Cooking the 'happy family' cuisine

MEDICO-ORIENTED DAD: "Whatever my family asks me to cook, that's what I'm going to cook."

Educator, martial-arts enthusiast and businessman Lorgene Mata has one more entry in his busy resumé: family cook

By Vergie Baja-Reyes, daughter of Nap V. Baja

AT FIRST glance, Lorgene Mata appears a very serious man. And why not? He's a noted psychology professor at St. Joseph's College, a karate black-belter and an officer of the Japan Karate Association-Philippines, and a savvy businessman who runs the country's first computerized psychological-testing center.

Yet, in spite of all his accomplishments and undertakings, Mata is, surprisingly, one guy who is still in touch with his "feminine side."

Yes, Virginia, our 54-year-old educator is also a great cook.

"Working with food is such a personal thing to me," he says. "I only cook for my family and I intend to make them happy and satisfied with my cooking."

At Hacienda, Mata says his culinary prowess came only after he got married to wife Penny in 1979.

"It was funny because two years into our marriage, my wife sort of got tired of cooking for the family. We then decided to just buy ready-to-eat food from the grocery or restaurant on the way home."

The system went on for six months, until they realized it was draining their budget.

"I told myself, why don't I just learn how to cook," he recalls. And, he did just that.

He started with the Ilocano's "national food," pinakbet, then ventured into more challenging recipes such as Ami-dare, Ashlovia and beef pechero.

Now Mata's sought after staples during special family get-togethers include salmon sinigang, shabu-shabu, sinuron sinigang, salmon sinigang, and grilling na baka with pechap.

"I love Filipino dishes, especially those with sauces. It's more challenging for me," says Mata. Penny now concentrates on baking.

Psychology guru

Mata has been teaching psychology for more than 20 years. He met his wife, who was his student, during a brief teaching stint at St. Paul's College. After a year of going out, they tied the knot. Their two children, Vince and Louie, are now 24 and 19, respectively.

Mata holds a doctorate and a master's degree in psychology, major in Personality, from the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He holds another masters in psychology major in Clinical Psychology, and a bachelor's degree in philosophy from University of Santo Tomas.

He's proud to say he has constructed and copyrighted more than 17 psychological tests and original computer evaluation software for the exclusive use of his company, LSH (Personnel Computerized Center), and developed the first and only computerized psychometric evaluation in the Philippines, Mata Computer-Assisted Psychological Evaluation System (MCAPES), copyrighted in 1986.

Those days, with his busy schedule, Mata goes to market on Saturdays and cooks only on Sundays. All through the week he thinks of the dishes he is going to cook for Sunday.

He claims that he has made a member of sabi for some, fish and fruit at Farmer's Market in Cubao. He also grows his own greens, such as kamote, sakaya and kangkong, and keeps a small poultry in the backyard.

"That's why all my chicken dishes are fresh and really tasty," he says.

Mata's menu is full of standard foods—simple, straightforward and no-fuss. He is partial to soups and dishes with sauces, like shopsuey and menudo.

He usually prepares six to eight viands everytime he cooks.

"I only cook once a week, so I created a cooking system wherein I can prepare six to eight dishes at the same time and enjoy the food for the entire week without spoiling them," he explains.

"Because, we're busy all the time, steaming, out of the house all the time. My wife and I go to work and my kids go to school. So, when one of us feels like eating at home, we just take out the food keeper from the freezer and heat it in the microwave. And I know the secret of how to keep dishes clean, sterile and still full of flavor," he adds.

What he does is, after cooking the dishes he immediately puts them in a microwavable food container and freezes them right away. The food keeper will create a vacuum inside the container and that becomes its protection.

"No bacteria will dare to set in," he says of this method. "When you reheat the food in the microwave it's not ordinary reheating. The natural taste of the food remains there."

Each food keeper in the freezer is numbered accordingly, the list written and posted outside the owl.

Through the years, after so many hits and misses, Mata has also learned how to make the food more palatable.

For instance, for shrimp-squid chopsuey is cooked differently from the Chinese way.

"I cook each ingredient separately like the cauliflowers, sayote, Baguio beans and carrots. I mix them only at the last point when I

CONTINUED ON

Outstanding fathers honored today

DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL Cruz Samson, Ulirang Ama ng Taguig

DOMINGO Ramirez Tarzan, Ulirang Ama ng Angkan

THE ULIRANG Ama Awards 2004 will be presented at 9 a.m. today, Father's Day, at the Grand Ballroom of the InterContinental Hotel in Makati.

The ceremonies will start with a Mass to be celebrated by Fr. Enrique A. Alino, parish priest of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, QC.

Anyone under a honorary chair like Angelo T. Reyes, Ulirang Ama Awardee 2003; Ulirang Ina at Ama Awards Foundation president; Wilfredo M. Tatlag will give the welcome remarks. Justice Adolfo Bonifa Azcuna will respond on behalf of the awardees.

Special awardees are Tanyag Ulirang Ama; Sipi Reboni Ace E. Barbers; Ulirang Ama ng Talisayan; Dongpanian Cirse Jumtoy; Ulirang Ama ng Angkan Dominggo Bautista Tarzang and; posthumous Ulirang Ama, Estban Blanco Calvo and Rosario Regan Macalintal Jr.

Special Awardees are Medicare and Allied Services, Sr. Nenuca del Mundo Custodio and Dr. Manuel A. Nillas Calayan; Agriculture, Alberto Barcoso Mesiningbing and Celso Bago Bonus; Government Service, Antino Reyes Burgos and Ronilo Gonzales Bongcac Jr.; Media and Journalism, Rolando "Nando" Agellon Teruidad; Arts and Culture, Angel Cruz Cantos; Business and Industry, Rene Lorio, Ludovica and Felipe Rivera Primetech; Sean Chris/Bob gines, Yong Ong and Robert G. Sr.; Law and Judiciary, Justice Jakalle Sevilla Asencio; and Military, Brig. Gen. Francisco Sutcher Ibarra.

Awards to also the recipients of another special award, the Tanyag Award by 40,000 Laborstores, given to someone who leads a well-balanced life—excelling in his profession and as a family man.

Other sponsors of the awards rites are Columbia International Steel Products Inc., Rivera Inc. Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., United Laboratories, Hazmel Pacchesels, Petrochemical Development Corp., Smith Syncholite and Globe, as well as past Ulirang Ina/Ama Awardees.

In July, the foundation will have a series of medical/dental missions. Donations, in cash or kind, can be sent to the foundation premises.

Nominations for next year's award winners are accepted at Suite 521, The Oil Institute Center, 315 Shaw Corp. Bldg., Annonas St., Legaspi Village, Makati. Call 8159267, 8437442, or fax 8159787. E-mail ulirang_mama_mo@hotmail.com

MOMBO Agaton Trinidad, media and journalism

MACARIO Rigan Macalintal Sr., posthumous award

CELSO Bago Bonus, agriculture

ESTEBAN Blanco Calvo, posthumous award

All about Daddy's girls

WITNESS the special bond fathers and daughters share in Mr magazine's latest issue.

Take a peek into the transcendental relationship of Jerry Yu and his daughter Cheryl in a special feature called "Daddy's Pride, Daughter's Fire."

Feel the "Step Love" that across his Colombian and British blues, and the "Mutual Admiration" of Dr. Carlos Bugarin and daughter Kara Magsaysay Adelpuis.

Or see just how much "Family Matters" to real chef Rafael Alunan and daughters Christina and Anna.

Readers will also be amazed to discover another side of Sen. Gringo Honasan as he reveals how he is as a father to his daughters in "Gringo's Charms."

Grab a copy of Mr. magazine's June issue and read all about Daddy's girls.

Mr magazine, another publication of Mega Magazines and Publications Inc./The Mega Group, is now available in all leading bookstores and newsstands nationwide.

ACTRESS Iza Calzado and dad Lito are featured in the latest issue of Mr. magazine.

Ad pays tribute to fathers

JOLLIBEE pays tribute to the papa, papan and daddies in its new television commercial.

Conceptualized by Saatchi Buzz advertising, the 30-second ad revolves around a father and his young son who had wishes for his son not to grow up yet, as he wants to enjoy every moment of his childhood for as long as he can.

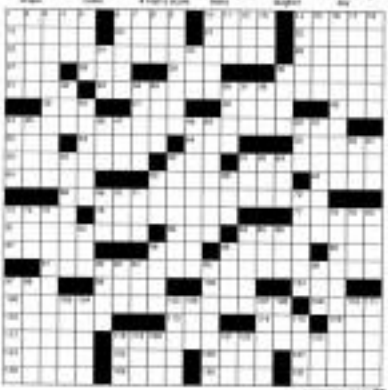
In the words of the ad: "Nuong ka my nong kamalo, amad. Mamet pa tayong lal libay sa kalayaan."

This Father's Day, Jollibee invites fathers and sons to experience wonderful moments together at Jollibee.

ENJOY wonderful moments with Dad and the rest of the family at Jollibee.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Donna J. Stone — JUST CAMS



answer on page 02

Value shopping for gift items

SHOPPING gives shoppers the best Father's Day gift ideas through its attractive gift items, enticing bargains, tax free sales and affirm, and irresistible price offs.

It's definitely an all-out sale every day for the whole month of June. Avail yourself of special gift ideas, from gadgets and sports gear to men's wear and home and household needs, all at low, low prices for the whole family to enjoy.

All Wheelish members get additional treats as well. For every purchase of men's items, Wheelcard and Elite card holders automatically earn double the number of points on their Wheelcard, which means every peso spent is equivalent to two points.

Members should present their cards before the processing of their transaction to earn the points.

The promo runs until June 27 at all Shopwise branches: in Alabang at the 2/F, main landing; Makati at the power aisle first segment; Ortas, and the newly opened Shopwise Araneta Center branch in Cubao.

GADGETS for dads at Shopwise

ENTERTAINMENT shows too

Cooking the 'happy family' cuisine

DAD Longsoo, who with Honey (left) and daughter Ginny, is one guy who is still in touch with his "feminine side."

put the pepper and season. By cooking them individually, each vegetable will come out crunchy and with the right consistency."

Even with his keen flavor, he cooks the veggies one by one and puts them layer by layer in a casserole.

Another secret he has for making a good stirgoreg and pochero is the addition of gabi (taro).

"People forget to put gabi into their soups to make it rich and tasty. Remember, any stirgoreg without gabi is not good stirgoreg," he declared.

For Wata, cooking is a therapy. It's a form of relaxation and a way of expressing his emotions, so to speak. But, most importantly, cooking is his way of serving his wife and kids.

"Whenever my family asks me to cook, that's what I cook," he says.

"I cook for them, not for myself. I think about them when I'm in the kitchen, what they like and how they want the food to be. I'm service-oriented to my family. I change my ingredients if they don't like it. I don't mind. I'm willing to change and do everything just to make it tasty for them."

His greatest satisfaction? "When my wife and kids say 'ang sarap naman, Dad.'"

E-mail the author at vlugo@inquirer.com.ph

It's always inspiring to see love abloom, and being in the company of two engaged couples is often the best way to melt a cynic's hardened heart

Modern romances prove love never goes out of fashion

By Kaylin Alore-Sadiwarat
Photos by Jim Galoo-Paredes

WHAT does it take to restore one's faith in the concept of love that requires all or the idea of being madly, blindly in love? Many married couples and skeptics will probably say everlasting love is but a myth and the rose-tinted glasses that those in the throes of newfound love wear will not last more than a couple of years.

Maybe it's true that after the heady honeymoon comes disillusionment. But surely there are those who manage to overcome the bumps and bumps along the way and reach the realization that true love is an act of the will and a leap of faith, not romantic imagining and heart-pumping scenarios a la Mills and Boon.

In any case, it's always inspiring to witness love abloom, and being in the company of two engaged couples, closely enamored with their respective spouses-to-be, is sometimes the only way to soften a cynic's hardened heart.

Beer buds, lifetime mates

"Marriage is a commitment so there's no giving up," says mild-mannered Gozon Ignacio, the owner and chief of Wenco Placenta and Biotreasure is set to wed petite and pretty Mai Mai Lanuza, assistant manager for family-owned Wireless Services Asia, a company handling software for telecommunication companies.

The engaged couple met eight years ago during an Atenean's retreat but sparks didn't fly then. Gozon was not a very active participant so the couple hardly saw each other in spite of having a number of mutual friends.

It was not until July 2002 that they first went out after Gozon asked to be set up on a date with Mai. "One beer affair developed to some of beer," says the couple, listing their nighttime jaunts with friends, the two would end up drinking together and talking nonstop about each other and some mutual interests like golf.

But she was couldn't be more different. Gozon is quiet, laid-back and introverted while Mai is the lively, passionate type. That is probably why they are meant to be together. They evidently complement each other. Gozon helps tone down Mai's strong personality while she draws him out of his shell.

"I found my best friend in her," says the lucky groom-to-be. "I like that she's simple, grounded and passionate about whatever she's into. She trusts in me and I admire that." Meanwhile, Mai says, "I love that Gozon is not hard to please. He is very secure with himself."

The young couple—Gozon is 28, Mai is 26—knows they have to retain their identity and individuality even after marriage. They give each other room to grow and are totally supportive of each one's endeavors.

Blind date but not blind love

Hotelkeeper Louie Papa and dear Daisy Ice Cream Marketer Glayrose Sarmiento first went out in August 1997 when Louie's officemate arranged a blind date. But Louie confesses he already knew how Maureen looked, as they had neighboring offices in the condo on Ayala Building.

The 28-year-old Maureen didn't like Louie at first. They were completely different. He loved going out and enjoyed the nightlife, she did not. She was also more reserved.

But in true blue boy meets girl tale, persistence and patience paid off. The 34-year-old charmer traveled almost daily from Alabang to Quezon City to woo the object of his affection.

"What started as a tentative friendship blossomed into full-fledged love. The couple spent their time together doing things they mutually enjoyed like shopping, watching movies and dining in different restaurants.

The relationship was further strengthened when they went through a similar painful experience in 2000 when both their fathers were diagnosed with colon cancer. Through it all, they drew strength from each other, the shared pain making their bond more solid.

Louie likes the fact that Maureen is responsible and knows how to prioritize. "We have the same outlook, goals and direction. Plus, I like the fact that she never says no to parties and keeps me grounded," says Louie. Maureen, on the other hand, says Louie calms her down as she went too fast. The glowing bride-to-be adds, "We're definitely a good match."

Now, exactly seven years later, they are set to wed on the eve of the anniversary of their first date.

ON MAUREEN, Bulgari Lunea white gold pearl necklace and white gold/pearl earrings with Pavé diamond. Cocoa wears Bulgari Dragons Prehistoria scuba dive watch, stainless rubber and steel strap with duplex brick buckle.

Milestones

SANTELAN-TUAZON

Rizabel Tuazon, daughter of senator **Rodolfo** and Lolita Tuazon, exchanged vows recently with **Philip Santelan**, son of **Wilfredo** and **Marina Santelan**, at the Cathedral of Immaculate Conception. Reception followed at the Manila Hotel.

VILLEJA-REYES

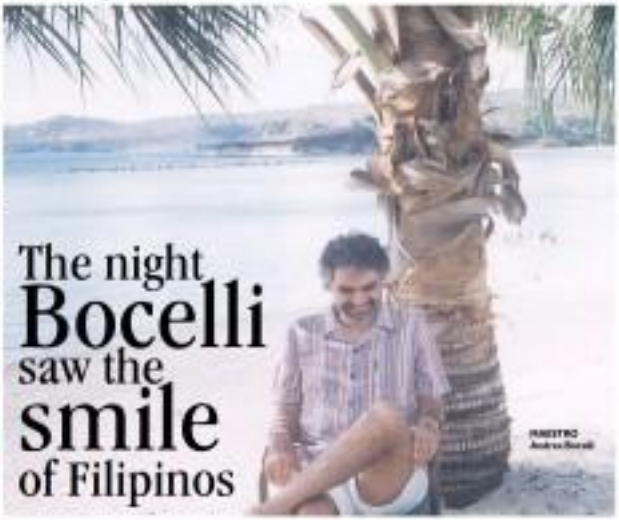
Eleanor Villeja, son of **Wilfredo** J. and **Duane T. Villeja**, married recently **Jowell Reyes**, daughter of **Fermin T. Reyes Jr.** and the late **Milma D. Solano**, at the Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Tagaytay.

The bride wore a duchess satin gown with pearls, glass beads and Swarovski crystals.

ANDRAN-FOSANA

Edgar Andaran, son of Graciella and Aurelio Andaran, married recently **Fides C. Fosana**, daughter of Eduardo and Gilda Fosana, at the St. John the Baptist church, Kalibo, Aklan. Reception followed at the Terramora Garden.

THE MAESTRO relaxes at the beach with his concert producer, Baby Arenas



The night Bocelli saw the smile of Filipinos

MAESTRO Andrea Bocelli

WITH Manduriao Oriental general manager Helmut Goldberger and Arenas

By Aimy Mesare
Contributor

THE CONTROVERSIAL Rosemarie "Baby" Arenas might have figured in the headlines for her social and occasional political activities.

But she insists that her biggest passion is the one least discussed. As a philanthropist and the moving spirit behind the Pasay Symphony Orchestra, she has conducted charities for orphans, street children, academic and musical scholars and the mentally handicapped. She inherited the passion from her mother, the late opera star Herminia Bautista.

In fact, the daughter of a classical soprano, Arenas, who also sings, is an artiste proper.

It is due to her passion for philanthropy and the arts that Arenas decided to mount, with ABS-CBN as a partner, the multi-million peso concert produced by "Andrea Bocelli: Live in Manila," at the Araneta Coliseum in April.

The Grammy winner's concert was a deeply personal project for Arenas, involving three years of detail in trying to convince Bocelli, his managers, and the Italian government, that the Philippines was a safe place for the tenor to visit.

Throughout the negotiations, Arenas insisted on holding the concert in a popular venue in order to accommodate the masses, and on an all-Filipino orchestra to back up Bocelli.

Happily for her, the concert—the last media event before the national election—was a massive critical and commercial success. The concert's telecast (it goes on "Andrea Bocelli: Live in Manila," will premiere on ABS-CBN at 9:30 tonight.

Still recovering from the whirlwind of success during the Italian tenor's visit—"I think the nerves I really my nerves are saving up again," she says—Arenas talks about what went on behind the scenes before, during and after the monumental concert.

Maestro Bocelli was quoted as saying that he "left the Filipino truly." Can you put that into context for us?

In fact, the warmth, the sincerity and the hospitality of the Filipino people, which is a spirit that is rare in the world. In my opinion, we were really the best of all his concert stops in Asia...From the air, to the artistry, to the professionalism of the entire Filipino workforce that took on the show.

Do you know he took out musicians (the 80-piece Manila Philharmonic Orchestra)—rumored the Pasay Symphony Orchestra for the Manila concert) with him as Hong Kong and Singapore? I know there are good musicians there, but he chose to bring ours. That's a double victory for the Philippines and its people, because their talents were recognized. The world knows now.

How did Bocelli react to the preparations given his concert?

According to his people, they had never seen him this happy and you see that in all the pictures—he's smiling, he's happy. He even was more spirited in his singing. I've seen him many times and I think his best performance was here in Manila. I could very well say that because I go to La Scala, I go to the Met, I could really be a critic and say that he did the best performance of his life in the Philippines.

You can ask Mr. Andel Calonzo of the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, who accompanied Mr. Bocelli to his Hong Kong and Singapore concerts. Those efforts cannot compare. In Singapore, I was told by my Chinese friend that the stage looked like a grandstand ball with just a big ribbon. Apparently it was just a convention hall.

As a result of our efforts, we received one of the most beautiful evenings I've ever seen, including building an elegant stage that was created over four days by 600 craftsmen from ABS-CBN. We can proudly say that we made Araneta more beautiful than the Metropolitan Theater in New York and La Scala de Milan or Milan.

What's the maestro like in his down time?

He's nice, he's natural, he's very friendly, and he is a true gentleman. He went for his compliments and he's not a prima donna.

And he was very positive about the Philippines. You could see it in the way he smiled, the way he sang even all stage, just because he was so happy about his response. In fact, even his limo was very happy to visit the Philippines. He very told me, "We wish the Philippines was the last stop on the tour, because it has been so wonderful and relaxing here."

I think it showed during the concert—a lot of people cried during the performance.

I'm glad you said that. My cameras, who makes the clothes that I wear around the house and my jammas, was crying in the bleachers, and she told me that even the people in the bleachers were wearing long gowns. And at the end, [when the cell] and am one cell phone rang throughout the entire performance.

When you talk of elegance, style, the refinement of the Filipino people—you have to give it to them. Many of the audience members had been to Maestro Bocelli's other performances like I have, and they all said that this audience was the best.

The audience really was extraordinary that evening. According to the people in his management team, a lot of other audiences, being naturally, would tolerate or sing to repeat their impolitesse. But we were behaved, appreciative and all that. They wanted more. In fact my office received thousands of letters and phone calls to spoke sang supports. People we don't even know go to our office and ask, "Are you going to bring him back?" "Who are you bringing next time?" And my answer is also the same—without government participation, I'm not mounting another concert.

Why is that?

I know I was going to lose a lot of money, because the ticket sales would not be enough (to cover the expenses). I think in things like this the government must participate. In Hong Kong, eight groups managed the concert. Here, it was just one team.

I'm proud to say, however, that in this case, teamwork really worked. We have ABS-CBN as our media partner—in my opinion, the best television network in the world. We have Manduriao Oriental Manila, under the leadership of Mr. Helmut Goldberger and Christian Gaudian, which really teamed up with us. And the major sponsors, the Globe, Unilab, Nestle, Ralph's Wine, Bogart'soda and all the rest.

Baby Arenas struggled for 3 years to bring the famous blind tenor to Manila amid bad international press about the Philippines. But it was all worth it, she says

As they say, when a team works together, the efforts become multiplied and the result is less. We say that during political elections. We said that in 1992, when we helped President Fidel Ramos win. But we should really put it to practice more often.

I know for a fact that the government intends to continue to promote tourism. Yes nothing happens. Whereas here, we must see connect and we create so many good economics about the country.

After the concert, Bocelli went around to explore the country. Where did he go?

He went to Boracay, and to the caverns, he went to Pagsanjan, between Mayo (Manila, Bocelli's best friend and manager) used to go to the Pagsanjan falls a lot. So we arranged for a vehicle to take him there early Sunday morning after his concert.

He said his goal was not to go down the rapids, but it started raining so he had to go back. He had two other concert stops after Manila, and he had to protect his instrument. But I heard from the driver that he sang all the way from Manila to Laguna.

Where did you stay?

On Monday, we decided to take him to the private beach in Nasugbu, Batangas, as he said he just could relax some more, and as we could show him even more of the Filipino hospitality there as we all talk about. We were still a long way away from the beach when we parked but Maestro Bocelli got off the vehicle and walked to the shore because he was so excited. I panicked, of course. But his people said it was okay. And you know the first thing he did when he reached the shore? He took off his socks and, barefoot as in his case with one hand and cradled it it was so touching.

He sought the scene of the food that was being prepared by Manduriao Oriental, the exclusive caterer for the concert. Their chefs were grilling, and he said, "I want to go to the water, but there is one problem. I am hungry!" I have to give a lot of credit to Manduriao for the food, which was not only delicious but prepared in the native style they were closely but very Filipino. Even if he could not eat, he could feel the effort put into it and of course, he could taste how good it was.

He loved the bananas—we have pictures of him carrying an entire bunch of what the bananas with about 20 to 25 eggs. He got a little bit of everything—he loved the ribs to mussel with tomatoes, adobo, mangoes. He had avocado, ensaymada, sapin-sapin, bukoMaestro also bought wine, Pinoy, but Philippine.

He ensured all day it was so fun to see him that joyful. Even his assistant Cristina turned to me and said, "I'm so happy we came here, because I've never seen Maestro this happy." He didn't want to leave the beach—only to see compromised with seven-up and left after seventy-six hours.

So was the entire three-year campaign to get Andrea Bocelli to Manila worth it?

Well, I wouldn't put it that way. On the one hand, I made so many people happy. The Philippines is already on the map, and as mentioned, we have a safe country, one of the best tourist destinations in the world. Safer measuring numbers. In fact, any showing may discourage that. Bocelli from coming. But I laugh: he likes. And now I was proven right. So never mind if I lose a lot of money—really a lot of money that I will never recover. You cannot put a price on that.

CONDUCTOR Marcello Rota and soprano Maria Luigia Borsi

BOCELLI with girlfriend Veronica Berti exchanging pleasantries with Arenas

THE TENOR enjoying fresh coconut juice. He also liked ihaw-ihaw station. To his right is Rachel Arenas and behind him are event people from his entourage.